

WASC Institutional Report



California State University
SAN MARCOS

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS



California State University
SAN MARCOS

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1 Introduction to the Institutional Report:

Institutional Context; Response to Previous Commission Actions

History of the Institution

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) is the 20th campus established in the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system. The University celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2015 and has made great strides from its beginning as a satellite campus of San Diego State University. Established in 1979, the satellite campus was reconstituted as the 20th CSU campus through Senate Bill 365 in 1989, becoming CSU San Marcos. Dr. Bill Stacy was the founding President for CSUSM (1989-97), followed by Dr. Alex Gonzalez (1997-2003). Dr. Karen Haynes, who joined the campus in 2004, is CSUSM's longest serving president. Under her leadership, CSUSM has emerged as a new kind of public university: a public institution with rigorous and innovative undergraduate and graduate programs along with a commitment to community service.



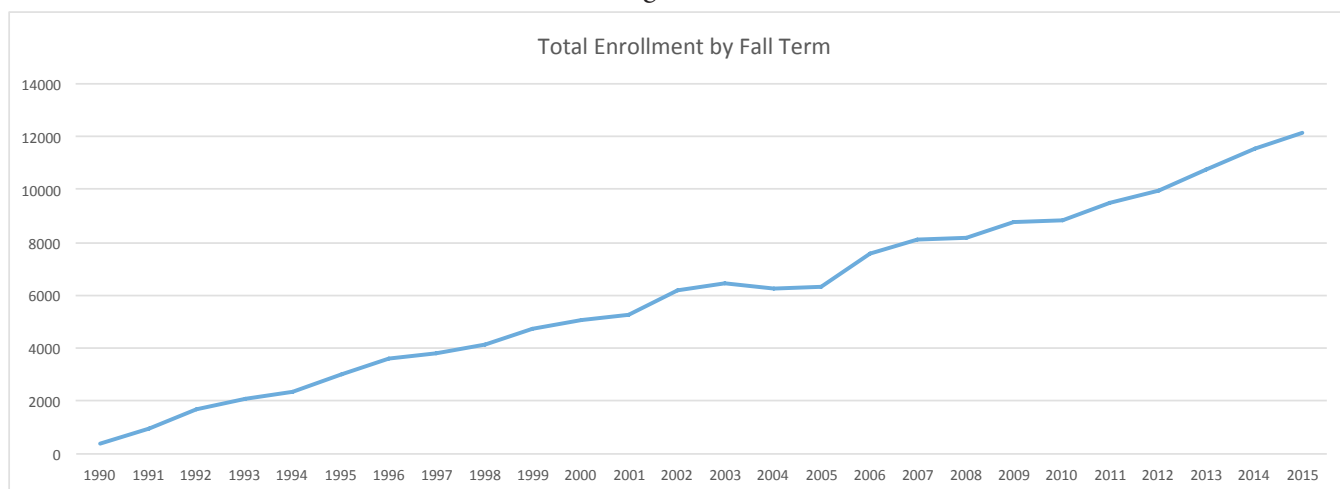
Graduation Ceremonies (1991)

CSUSM is distinctive for its strong sense of entrepreneurialism and adaptability, its deeply embedded community partnerships and accountability to its region, and its consistent use of data-driven decision-making frameworks. With a technologically sophisticated campus and an increasing focus on community engagement, CSUSM brings together a hands-on, real-world curriculum, with applied research to fuel the creative thinking needed to solve critical twenty-first century problems. As this institutional report elaborates, CSUSM embraces the use of:

- High-Impact Practices (HIPs);
- initiatives to ensure success of first-year students, many of whom are first-generation students from underrepresented groups;
- community engagement by students, faculty, staff, and administrators;
- the education of non-traditional students; and
- continual self-reflection through assessment and program review.

Over the years, the campus has grown dramatically from the first graduating class of 7 students in 1991 to a graduating class of approximately 2650 in spring 2015. The University is on an upward trajectory in terms of enrollment, with a student body of over 12,000 in fall 2014, an increase highlighted in figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1



The goals of the campus community can be seen through the mission statements of the [University](#) and the individual colleges ([College of Business Administration \(CoBA\)](#), [College of Education, Health, and Human Services \(CoEHHS\)](#), [College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral, and Social Sciences \(CHABSS\)](#), and [College of Science and Math \(CSM\)](#)), as well as [Extended Learning](#), and the [Library](#)). The CSUSM mission defines the University as an academic community dedicated to the values of intellectual engagement, community, integrity, innovation and inclusiveness. Mission statements from units around the campus all share common themes that emphasize diversity (e.g. [Office of Diversity, Educational Equity and Inclusion](#)), community engagement (e.g. [Division of Community Engagement, Service Learning](#)), and a commitment to producing lifelong and active learners (e.g. [Senior Experience](#), the [Osher Institute](#)). Additionally, all units of the University strive to provide a high-quality holistic and interdisciplinary educational experience that produces engaged, ethical, and technologically competent citizens through collaborations involving the faculty, the staff, the students, and the community.

**THE CSUSM
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INCLUSIVENESS.**

The mission, vision and values of CSUSM and its institutional strategic priorities guide all aspects of institutional planning. In 2006, President Haynes led a [strategic planning](#) process that resulted in the following five strategic priorities:

- Academic Excellence,
- Student Life,
- Campus Climate,
- Community Partnerships, and
- Educational Equity.

The president and the vice presidents evaluate objectives within each of the five priorities through regularly reappraised measures of success. Data are used to identify gaps that are then targeted as the focus for new interventions. In addition, the University con-

tinuously aligns short-term and long-range planning goals with enrollment planning, physical master planning, and budget and resource allocation.

President Haynes reiterated the University’s goals in her [2014 report to the community](#). The goals she set for the University included raising the educational attainment of the region, creating a student body that mirrors the diversity of the region, and

connecting with and serving the community by producing well-prepared, ready-to-lead graduates. To illustrate these goals, the President highlighted that during her tenure the University has:

- doubled its student population from 6,000 to 12,000 students,
- doubled the number of buildings from 10 to 20,
- doubled the endowment from \$10 million to \$20 million,
- more than doubled the number of academic degrees from 27 to 58,
- more than doubled the number of the athletic teams,
- nearly tripled the number of alumni from 13,000 to 35,000, and
- almost tripled the employee base from 700 to 1,900.

Thus, CSUSM has steadily been making strides to serve the students and the community better.

In 2006, CSUSM was one of 62 universities and colleges nationwide to receive an elective Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the two areas of curricular engagement and outreach and partnerships. [The University earned this classification again in January 2015.](#) CSUSM'S commitment to the public good combines its participation in a larger state university system with its drive to forge a separate and unique identity within the local communi-

ty it serves. The University has attracted diverse, accomplished, and creative faculty who are dedicated teachers. Staff members also epitomize the CSUSM mission through



CSUSM HAS THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT VETERANS PER CAPITA OF ANY UNIVERSITY IN THE CSU SYSTEM.

their service to students and engagement with on-campus and community groups.

A key component of the CSU mission is to encourage and provide access to an excellent education for all who are prepared for and wish to participate in



Grand opening of Center for ACE Scholars.

collegiate study. CSUSM is committed to establishing innovative programs and services to support the recruitment of academically promising students across cultural, geographical, physical, academic, financial, or personal barriers. During the recession, without any state support, the University doubled the number of degrees that it offered, allowing more students to access higher educational opportunities. In 2006, the campus began a program built around guaranteed admission agreements with ten public school districts in its service area. The [Alliance to Accelerate Excellence in Education](#) established Guaranteed Admission agreements with ten area school districts to improve the college attendance and completion rates of students in North San Diego County. CSUSM is the only university in California with a program of this magnitude, creating a college-bound culture for some 200,000 regional students.

An example of CSUSM's commitment to access is the [ACE Scholars Services](#), a comprehensive program that supports former foster youth. Another is its [Veterans Center](#), the second in the CSU system

when it opened in 2008. The Veterans Center actively recruits students from all military bases in the local region. Approximately 12% of CSUSM students are veterans, service members, reservists, or dependents/spouses. CSUSM has the highest percentage of student veterans per capita of any university in the CSU system. In 2013, the Stevens Institute of Technology designed a “smart building” for the solar decathlon, and donated the building to CSUSM in 2014 as a new Veterans Center facility for the campus.

Built on the land of the Luiseño Indians, CSUSM is proud of its impressive history of engaging the local American Indian population. There are 25 tribal communities in San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, with 18 of those communities located within the University’s service region. In 2007, CSUSM signed a [Memorandum of Understanding with Santa Ysabel Reservation](#) to better serve this population by increasing the number of American Indian students. Additionally, CSUSM continues to build strategic partnerships with its tribal neighbors in order to identify outcomes mutually beneficial outcomes through the efforts of a full-time tribal liaison, a community-based native advisory council, and the [California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center](#).

The University’s commitment to the public good is demonstrated by its intentional and carefully planned efforts to address the achievement gap; CSUSM has closed the gap in one-year continuation rates between under-represented minority students and majority students. This was accomplished through a holistic approach that provides support to all first-year students through an Office of First-Year Programs and other initiatives. Even more impactful is the fact that CSUSM alumni number just over 35,000 and some 80 percent remain in the San Diego, Riverside, and Orange County regions after graduation,

equipped with profession-ready skills, creative talents, global awareness, and homegrown commitment.

CSUSM is actively attuned to the needs of employers. The University surveys key stakeholders in multiple business and nonprofit sectors to learn about their expectations, and creates innovative degree and certificate programs so graduates can meet those needs. The University is increasingly concerned with career readiness programs that link CSUSM and the workplace in a complementary relationship that fosters the success of both parties. One very important way the University stays in tune with regional needs is through the Office of Extended Learning. CSUSM has innovatively and creatively used Extended Learning to deliver programs that otherwise could not have been offered given cuts in state funding.

Some of CSUSM’s partnerships encompass, not only the needs of students and their future employers, but also universal quality-of-life concerns affecting all members of the community. In 2012, CSUSM launched the CSU Institute for Palliative Care, the first (and still only) statewide initiative focused on palliative care workforce development and community awareness building in the nation. Since its founding, the Institute has educated more than 1100 healthcare professionals, offered 15 on-



Institute for Palliative Care

line [professional certificate programs](#), and integrated palliative care content into more than 30 courses on this campus, while expanding its work to include an additional six campus partners in the CSU.

Table 1.1
Percent and Number of First Generation Students by Fall Term*

First Generation Definition	Fall 2010		Fall 2011		Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount
Both Parents High School or Less	21.8	(2023)	23.2	(2292)	24.7	(2565)	27.4	(3025)	29.3	(3559)
Both Parents Some College or Less	40.9	(3788)	42.3	(4493)	43.4	(4493)	45.9	(5077)	47.4	(5758)
Both Parents 2 Yr. Degree or Less	49.6	(4592)	51.0	(5044)	51.9	(5379)	54.3	(6006)	54.7	(6648)

*Please note that the First Generation categories overlap and are not additive - 3 different definitions are used for comparison.

**Percentage of all enrolled students.

The diversity of the over 12,000 students who attend CSUSM's 304-acre main campus reflects the region, a goal set in 2006. As an example, when the campus first opened in fall 1990, 8% of CSUSM students identified as Hispanic, a figure that did not match the composition of the service area. Recent data show that the Hispanic population in the University's service area is 30.9% (Appendix 1.1). In fall 2014, the student body was 38.7% Hispanic. The student profile for 2014 includes 0.4% Native American/American Indian, 3.3% African American, 9.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 33.1% Caucasian, 5.4% two or more races, and 2.7% Non-Resident. The percentage of Underrepresented Minority (URM) undergraduate students (African American, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American) grew from 31% in fall 2009 to 44% in fall 2014 (Appendix 1.2). In 2009, CSUSM earned the official designation of an Asian American/ Native American/Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI), and in 2010, earned the official designation of a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

In addition, the number of first-time, first-year students who are also first-generation students (neither parent earned a college degree) has been steadily increasing over the years – reaching over 47.4% in fall 2014 (table 1.1).

The student population skews significantly female. In fall 2014, the student population was approximately 61% female and 39% male. Approximately 73% of CSUSM students receive financial aid; the average amount of financial aid received per student in 2012-13 was \$10,681. Appendix 1.3 gives more overview information about the campus as presented to the CSU Board of Trustees in 2015.



University Student Union

Overview of Capacity, Infrastructure and Operations

The campus has more than one million square feet of facilities, all of which have been constructed since 1990. In the last 10 years, CSUSM has broken ground on 11 new buildings, including the new University Student Union, the Social and Behavioral Sciences Building, the Student Health and Counseling Services Building, the Veterans Center, and a new Sports Center. Further, CSUSM has over 150 teaching and research laboratories.

CSUSM opened an offsite campus in Temecula (standalone location) in 2009. This campus represents a strong collaboration between Extended Learning at CSUSM and the city of Temecula.



Temecula campus grand opening.

The campus currently serves 332 degree-seeking students in Nursing, Kinesiology, and Business¹. In collaboration with the City of Temecula and Mt. San Jacinto Community College (MSJC), CSUSM opened an additional facility, the Temecula Higher Education Center, in Fall 2014 to support a dual admission degree program with MSJC, which currently offers a BS in Business Administration and will expand to include other programs².

CSUSM has a robust online learning environment available to students. One degree program, the RN-BSN, is offered in a completely online format. In

- 1 Criminology and Justice Studies is planned to begin in Fall 2015.
- 2 Substantive Change application approved in August 2015.

spring 2015, 98 courses were delivered fully online and 34 were partially online. CSUSM is working towards using online learning tools to support access, communication, and student success. One example of how faculty are working to enhance online education is by taking advantage of grant opportunities. For example, the Chancellor's Office awarded 11 grants to CSUSM faculty in Spring 2015 to re-design courses using technology to reduce bottlenecks and increase student pass rates in high DFW³ courses.

As of fall 2014, CSUSM had 244 tenure-track faculty members and 396 lecturers organized into four colleges:

- College of Business Administration (CoBA);
- College of Education, Health, and Human Services (CoEHHS);
- College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences (CHABSS);
- College of Science and Mathematics (CSM).

In fall 2014, the faculty included slightly more women than men (52% vs. 48%). The tenure/tenure-track faculty are also ethnically diverse. In fall 2014, 33% of tenure/tenure-track faculty identified as African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or Pacific Islander (Appendix 1.4).

Structural Changes

Since CSUSM's last WASC review in 2009, the University significant structural changes have occurred, accompanied by personnel shifts. The changes are indicative of a growing university and have been guided by the institution's strategic priorities.

CSUSM's independent Division for Community Engagement, formed in 2011, formalized and organized the University's long-standing commitment to creating a positive impact by cultivating mean-

ingful connections and building innovative partnerships between the University and communities. In 2006, when "champions" were assigned to each of CSUSM's strategic priorities, Dr. Jan Jackson, Dean of Extended Learning, was assigned to champion the priority of Community Partnerships. She was named Associate Vice President for Community Engagement in 2009, reporting to President Haynes, while continuing to serve as Dean of Extended Learning. Dr. Jackson served as the founding Vice President of the Division of Community Engagement until her retirement in 2014. Dr. Patricia L. Prado-Olmos became Vice President in January 2015.

CSUSM's [Division of Academic Affairs](#) was restructured in 2010. The College of Arts and Sciences was separated into the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences (CHABSS) and the College of Science and Mathematics (CSM). The College of Education became a School of Education and was merged with the School of Nursing and the departments of Kinesiology and Human Development to form the College of Education, Health and Human Services (CEHHS). The departments of Human Development, Kinesiology, Social Work, and Speech-Language Pathology became the School of Health Sciences and Human Services in 2013. The School of the Arts was founded within CHABSS in 2014.

New deans were hired in 2011 to lead three new colleges, along with a new dean to lead Extended Learning. The currently seated deans have all been appointed within the last four years. In addition, Dr. Graham Oberem became Provost in 2013. He hired the first Vice-Provost at CSUSM, Dr. Kamel Haddad in 2014. The [Office of Undergraduate Studies](#) was created in 2014, with Dr. Dawn Formo as its first dean. In Spring 2015, the AVP for Academic Programs became Dean of Academic Programs, reporting to the Vice Provost (instead of the Provost as was previously the case). The Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research also report to the Vice Provost. In addition, CSUSM successfully completed dean searches in Instructional and Information Technology Services (IITS) and the College of Business Administration.

³ Students receiving grades of D, F, or withdrawing from a course means they have to repeat that course, thus increasing pressure to provide enough seats to fulfill demand.

CSUSM's [Division of Student Affairs](#) has also evolved its leadership in anticipation of a growing student population and robust co-curricular development. This evolution included appointing a new Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Lorena Meza in 2013, along with a new Associate Vice President and Dean of Students. These changes in leadership and structure both shape and reflect CSUSM's purposeful self-positioning as a new kind of public university.

Lastly, in the Office of the President, Dr. Karen Haynes formally created the Office of Diversity, Educational Equity and Inclusion in 2012. Currently under the direction of its second Associate Vice President, Arturo Ocampo, the office provides resources and leadership across the University in all areas related to diversity such as the University-wide Diversity Mapping project and subsequent Diversity Strategic Plan development and implementation.

Response to Previous WASC Reviews

CSUSM has sustained a strong relationship with WASC, with an accreditation history demonstrating close attention to WASC Standards, successful substantive change proposal submissions, and institutional progress in regard to all Commission recommendations. For example, after the 2007 Capacity and Preparatory Review, the Commission highlighted the following issues for the Educational Effectiveness Review:

- Student Access and Success,
- Curricular and Co-Curricular Assessment of Learning, and
- Enhanced Budgetary Planning.

For the 2009 Educational Effectiveness Review, three themes were addressed:

- Academic Planning, with attention to budgetary processes;
- Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, with attention to curricular and co-curricular learning assessment; and

- Retention of First-Year Students, with attention to student access and success.

The Commission felt that CSUSM thoroughly addressed the issues raised by the review. Most recently, an interim report to WASC in fall 2012 detailed progress in (a) academic master planning, (b) strengthening academic programs through assessment of student learning, and (c) improving retention of first-year students and graduation rates.

The WASC Interim Report Committee commended CSUSM for its broad approach to academic master planning, noting

“...key accomplishments including: the establishment of the Director of Academic Assessment position staffed by a full-time faculty member released from teaching; the availability of continuing assessment workshops to help faculty develop and revise Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs); the approval by the Academic Senate of Program Review and Policy Guidelines; the creation of a one-stop shop program review website for use by reviewers; and the completion of annual assessment plan protocols.”

The Interim Report Committee was pleased to see CSUSM satisfying the initial steps of the Commission's recommendations and taking steps to move forward into the future. The Committee noted significant accomplishments CSUSM has made in retention:

- Proactive, organized efforts to improve retention and graduate rates;
- The hiring of a Student Academic Success Coordinator;
- Making retention and graduate goals a community-wide effort; and
- Working to ensure connections between co-curricular and curricular efforts.

Preparation for the Accreditation Review

Preparation for the current review began in spring 2014. Dr. Regina Eisenbach, Dean of Academic Programs and WASC Accreditation Liaison Officer, approached individual faculty and staff to request their participation, seating a steering committee with broad campus representation to oversee the writing of this Institutional Report. Members representing all four colleges, as well as the Division of Student Affairs, were charged by Provost Oberem to serve as the CSUSM WASC Steering Committee. The steering committee has been involved with all steps of the process, including ensuring campus-wide participation and faculty involvement. A list of committee members, indicating the breadth of representation across campus, is in Appendix 1.5.

Based on the 2013 Handbook of Accreditation, each Steering Committee member chaired a writing team organized around the following Essays:

Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees.

Described the work of faculty in all four colleges to develop and approve adoption of Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.

Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation.

Reported on the work of the Core Competencies Team in piloting assessments for four of the five Core Competencies.

Student Success: Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation.

Summarized work from across campus focused on student success.

Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data and Evidence.

Reported on progress in program review and assessment since the last review.

Sustainability: Financial Viability; Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment.

Worked with key campus personnel, including faculty, to report on budgeting and planning.

Once assembled, the teams worked throughout summer and fall 2014 and spring 2015. The WASC Steering Committee organized university-wide town hall meetings to inform the campus community about the self-study process to provide an overview of each Essay and invite feedback. Essays were posted on a publicly accessible website and made available for review and comment by any member of the CSUSM community. Writing team leaders incorporated feedback into subsequent drafts. A faculty member from the Department of Literature and Writing Studies compiled the Essays into the final report.

2 Compliance with Standards: Self-Review Under the Standards; the Compliance Checklist

Since the last WASC reaccreditation review (2009), CSUSM has worked to balance growth in its student population with continued quality of academic programs, often in the context of difficult budget times. The University’s Interim Report (2012) and subsequent WASC Committee responses indicated CSUSM’s good progress on the areas identified in the last accreditation review.

Worksheet for Self-Review/ Compliance Checklist

(CFRs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.2, 2.8, 2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 4.1)

Essay 1 describes the process through which the WASC Steering Committee and writing teams were created and conducted key tasks. To complete the Self-Review, the steering committee and members of the writing teams each individually completed a worksheet. The mode for each numerical and alphabetical rating was calculated, along with a synthesis of the comments. This constitutes the institution’s worksheet (Appendix 2.1).

**THE
 UNIVERSITY’S
 QUALITY
 ASSURANCE
 EFFORTS ARE
 DATA-DRIVEN.**

Areas of Strength

(CFRs 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.10, 2.12, 3.2, 3.4, 4.2, 4.4, 4.7)

Strengths in the area of defining institutional purpose and ensuring educational objectives include clarity of policies, procedures, and CSUSM’S mission, vision, values, and strategic planning across the campus. The University’s core functions are enhanced by the strengths of effective data-gathering (primarily through the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis) and clear descriptions of degree requirements and curricular processes. The University’s quality assurance efforts are data-driven. CSUSM’s progress in annual assessment and program review continues to evolve as the campus develops a culture of evidence.

Progress in assessment of Core Competencies (active since spring 2014, with all five assessed by fall 2015) is another important strength of this campus. Full reports on the first two assessments are in Appendix 4.1.

The growth of this campus despite a decline in fiscal resources is evidence of CSUSM’s strength in developing and deploying resources. Another institutional strength is open lines of communication between faculty and administration in shared governance. Organizational structures (for example, Institutional Planning and Analysis), along with

availability of data (for example, widespread use of PeopleSoft queries provided by Instructional and Information Technology Services), help create an organization committed to quality assurance. Finally, the public availability of information, including graduation and retention data and the full availability of the catalog and schedule of classes on the campus website enables greater transparency, broader access, and better accountability for CSUSM.

Areas of Challenge

(CFRs 1.2, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.6, 2.8, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5,)

In ensuring educational objectives, areas of challenge include increasing and maintaining the diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators and, for some units, sustaining annual assessment practices. While the University has newly adopted Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs), development of Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) is still in progress, and both ULOs and GLOs need integration into assessment planning. Implementation of a plan for General Education program assessment, another key assessment need, will begin in fall 2015. Essays 3 and 6 provide more detail on ULOs and assessment efforts in general.

In applying resources, the institution's challenge seems to be balancing growth in student numbers with growth in faculty numbers and determining what a "sufficient" number of tenure-track faculty really means. The need for more clarity around the role of lecturer faculty emerged as an important issue. In meeting the commitment to quality assurance and improvement, a university-wide, purposeful strategy for collecting, analyzing, and using evidence to improve institutional practices is essential. This goes along with making more progress towards developing a culture of assessment.

**AVAILABILITY
OF DATA IS
A CLEAR
STRENGTH FOR
THIS CAMPUS.**

Addressing Areas of Challenge

The self-review uncovered current challenges that present opportunities for improvement, which the University is already in the process of pursuing.

Institutional Learning Outcomes (CFRs 2.3, 2.4).

As mentioned above, while Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs) have been developed, Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) have not. GLOs are, however, being developed and should be ready for submission to the Academic Senate in fall 2015. Beyond this, all learning outcomes need to be more fully disseminated to guide program development and improvement. Essay 3 discusses the efforts in place to begin this process.

Institutionalizing and Organizing for Assessment (CFRs 2.2a, 2.2b 2.6).

Creating a culture of evidence has begun with commitment of resources to support the University Assessment Council, an initiative to increase faculty involvement in assessment. The University has hired a university assessment specialist, and two of four colleges either have, or are hiring, college assessment specialists. These actions demonstrate that assessment is a priority for the campus; they also build faculty buy-in and participation in concrete, practical ways.

Using Data for Decision Making (CFRs 2.11, 2.2b).

Availability of data is a clear strength for this campus. The challenge is how to make the most effective use of data for decision making. In some areas on campus, data-driven decision making is already happening. For example, CSUSM's Division of Student Affairs promotes a culture of strategic planning and assessment in which decisions are driven by data in an effort to maximize the application of resources to best meet students' academic and developmental needs and support their success. Progress is occurring in the Division of Academic Affairs as well. For

example, the program review process culminates in a Memorandum of Understanding whereby resource decisions--such as faculty hires and lab space--are tied to the program's assessments along with other factors. Further, there is an effort underway to link CSUSM Institutional Planning and Analysis surveys (such as freshman and senior surveys) with assessments of academic programs (such as GE and majors) so as to triangulate direct and indirect assessment and gain a more holistic view of student achievement.

3 Degree Programs:

Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees (CFRs 1.2, 2.2-2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3)

CSUSM has, since fall 2013, pursued the goal of formally articulating the meaning of obtaining a CSUSM undergraduate degree and the distinctive qualities that characterize it. In December 2014, CSUSM's Academic Senate approved a statement about university-wide Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs) derived from the University's mission statement. The ULOs represent the culmination of a sustained discussion at CSUSM that parallels similar conversations at other CSUs and nationally. As mentioned in Essay 2, the development of Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) for CSUSM's 14 graduate programs is in progress.

CSUSM's conversation around ULOs began with a very successful (65 attendees) Discovery Café in September 2013. Eight follow-up mini workshops were also held during fall 2013, with 28 faculty attending at least one workshop. A collaborative and inclusive process later generated three drafts of ULOs, written and revised by three different task forces: one comprised of faculty and administrators, one formed by the Academic Senate Executive Committee and the Dean of Academic Programs, and one representing the University Assessment Council (formed early in Fall 2014). In the end, over 65 faculty were involved in the creation of the ULOs. After two readings, the Academic Senate approved the following ULOs:

Students graduating with a Bachelor's degree from CSU San Marcos will be creative, empathetic, and engaged life-long learners who are:

1. **Knowledgeable in their field of study.** Students will be able to:
 - a. Articulate, integrate, and apply theories and methods of a field of study to create professional, scholarly, and/or artistic work.
2. **Comprehensive and critical thinkers.** Students will be able to:
 - a. Identify key concepts and develop a foundation for future inquiry;
 - b. Analyze complex problems and develop solutions by applying quantitative and qualitative reasoning, integrating knowledge and skills from a variety of disciplines;
 - c. Construct well-reasoned arguments based on evidence.
3. **Globally and culturally intelligent.** Students will be able to:
 - a. Apply multiple perspectives to address local, regional, global, and cultural issues;
 - b. Demonstrate an intermediate proficiency in a language other than English.
4. **Skilled communicators.** Students will be able to:
 - a. Communicate clearly and effectively in both written and oral forms;
 - b. Tailor communication to audience and context.

The quality of a CSUSM degree is assessed through an analysis of these outcomes. Progress towards the ULOs is continuously evaluated both at the program level and the individual course level (see

[program review](#); [curricular development](#); and [curricular review](#)). The University also continuously updates the [Academic Master Plan](#) and the [Long-Range Academic Master Plan](#) with respect to the ULOs. Like many of CSUSM's frameworks to assess teaching and learning, the ULOs (specifically 2: comprehensive and critical thinkers, and 4: skilled communicators) align with the five Core Competencies identified by WASC.

High-Impact Practices

CSUSM has developed a focus on high-impact practices (HIPs) as a catalyst for students' achievement of key learning outcomes. The Office of Undergraduate Studies (OUGS) was created to provide a center of excellence in HIPs for the campus. The OUGS builds on the prior work of the Office of First Year Programs.

Research suggests that [HIPs](#) such as first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning/community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects increase student retention and engagement, as well as spurring the development of comprehensive and critical thinking skills such as the ability to solve complex problems. Research shows that high-impact practices have numerous positive effects on students who participate in them, with increasing effects as students engage in more such practices.

CSUSM students are increasingly engaged in HIPs. For example, they are more likely than students at other campuses to participate in service learning and learning communities. According to [2014 NSSE data](#), 13% of first-year CSUSM students participated in learning communities (the same as the system wide average), while 35% planned to participate, which is 5% higher than the system average and 10% higher than the survey-wide average (see Appendix 3.1).

Six percent of first-year students had engaged in faculty-mentored undergraduate research, which was slightly higher than both the system and survey average. Other data indicated that 88% of CSUSM seniors had participated in HIPs and 63% had engaged in more than one. More than half of CSUSM graduating seniors surveyed said their education has contributed to their ability to solve complex real-world problems (2014 NSSE) and about half reported problem-solving to be a major strength (2013 College Senior Survey). HIPs enhance students' ability to apply their curricular knowledge to practical

problems, preparing them to meet challenges in their post-college careers and lives. HIPs recur in the discussion of ULOs because they are a distinctive strength of institutional practices at CSUSM. The prominence of HIPs on this campus clearly enhances the strength and quality of the CSUSM degree.

**CSUSM STUDENTS
ARE MORE
LIKELY THAN
STUDENTS AT
OTHER CAMPUSES
TO PARTICIPATE
IN SERVICE
LEARNING AND
LEARNING
COMMUNITIES.**

Knowledge in the Field of Study (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3)

Faculty who develop and teach discipline-specific curricula determine the knowledge and skills important to a specific field of study and articulate them in course syllabi. The University Curriculum Committee requires new course proposals to include Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that provide the tools to assess, in each course, the level to which students have developed the skills and acquired the core knowledge of a particular discipline. Curricular review is an example of key steps CSUSM has taken to develop a culture of learning assessment, grounded in the development of Program Student Learning Objectives (PSLOs) by each program at the University. The practice of annual assessment of PSLOs, and a recently revitalized program review process are others. The culture of assessment has been facilitated through the establishment of the University Assessment Council. The Council, staffed by faculty and administrators from across the University, will make assessment work-

shops available to help faculty develop and revise PSLOs. The council has also designed and implemented a one-stop shop program review website for reviewers, and completed the development of annual assessment plan protocols, as elaborated in Essay 6.

In addition to assessment and program review activities, student performance on external assessments, such as professional exams, clarifies the meaning and ensures the integrity of a CSUSM degree on the basis of graduates' knowledge in the field of study. Various examples illustrate the excellent preparation the CSUSM degree offers.

- CSUSM accounting graduates achieved the highest pass rates on the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam in the CSU system in 2011 and the second highest in 2012.
- In 2013-14, 95.83% of nursing graduates passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX).
- All (100%) Communicative Sciences and Disorders graduate students from 2011-14 passed the PRAXIS exam measuring discipline-specific content and skills.
- In the School of Education, 98.37% of initial credential program completers passed the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) in 2013-14.

Comprehensive and Critical Thinkers (CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.6, 4.3)

Carol Geary Schneider (2008) posits that “the college degree is meaningful, after all, only when it represents forms of learning that are both valued by society and empowering to the individual.” The quality and strength of the degree rests partially on the ability of that degree to give students consequential experiences and skills that will serve them upon graduation. The outcome of “comprehensive and critical thinking” encompasses a number of such skills. An exemplar is the ability to address complex problems. When surveyed, the majority (75%) of employers identified problem solving as one of the five key skills colleges should emphasize. According

to the [2013 annual results from the National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE), administered to freshmen and graduating seniors in their spring term, “students who participate in courses that emphasize higher-order learning are more likely to apply what they learned to practical problems.” Analysis of 2014 NSSE data (Appendix 3.2) shows that CSUSM’s students’ responses to items related to higher-order learning (such as analyzing and evaluating information) were significantly higher than those of students at other California State University campuses.

Information Literacy Program

The Library’s Information Literacy Program (ILP) is an example of CSUSM’s focus on the development of students’ comprehensive and critical thinking through training in research and writing skills. The program also exemplifies how WASC-identified Core Competencies are embedded in multiple locations in CSUSM’s frameworks for teaching and learning.

The library is both physically and symbolically where students go to continue the research process beyond the classroom. It is often their first foray into independent research and where they go to process and contextualize the classroom or in-the-field experience. Library faculty and staff in ILP work



The Kellogg Library building.

collaboratively with campus partners to create learning environments and experiences that enable students to become student-scholars and lifelong learners able to find, evaluate, and use information effectively to think critically and make informed decisions. ILP

members foster students' habits of mind, help build their knowledge base, and add to their skill sets. The program cultivates student-scholars able to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape, create information, and contribute to knowledge-sharing among experts in a field. Upon leaving higher education, student-scholars will be well-prepared to be engaged, contributing members of their communities.

Library faculty in ILP work with first-year students, students in general education courses, and students within their majors and/or graduate programs. An understanding of these developmental levels of the intellectual experience is necessary to identify and create impactful, transformative learning opportunities. In addition, ILP faculty identify, implement, and assess a variety of pedagogical approaches and high-impact practices appropriate to the instructional setting and learning outcomes by proactively establishing and maintaining strong relationships with faculty and administration.

Library faculty are experts in information seeking behaviors, the structure and organization of information, and how information is evaluated. Three principles guide ILP's practices:

- Students' abilities to find and use the research/professional literature cannot develop without an understanding of the scholarly research process, their role in the process, and the influence this process has on the world around them;
- As active members of a scholarly community, students are critical evaluators, users, and creators of knowledge; and
- The academic experience can serve as a model to illustrate how to be an engaged and contributing member of one's local, regional, and global community.

**ALL UNITS (100%)
REPORTED THAT
THEY OFFERED
COURSES
THAT PROVIDE
UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH
OPPORTUNITIES**

Committee On Undergraduate Research

Another purposeful institutional support for CSUSM students' development of comprehensive and critical thinking is the Committee on Undergraduate Research ([CUGR](#)). Faculty-mentored undergraduate research is another documented HIP. CUGR illustrates CSUSM's sustained commitment to infusing HIPs throughout the curriculum. The committee, comprised of representatives from all campus units, has set measurable, multi-year goals for developing institutional priorities for undergraduate research. These goals include:

- assessing CSUSM's undergraduate research activities;
- fostering dialogue among faculty and students, developing a system to link faculty and undergraduate research activities; and
- creating a centralized undergraduate research program to coordinate activities across campus.

The committee also works to enhance and develop a research-supportive undergraduate curriculum, identify external resources to support undergraduate research, and recognize student and faculty research formally by celebrating achievements in regular events like the biannual [student poster showcase](#) and the [celebration of faculty scholarship and creative activity](#), which has included collaborative faculty-student research projects.

In 2013, CUGR conducted a survey of undergraduate research and creative activities among CSUSM campus units. Of the 13 units (colleges, departments, and programs) that responded, 100% reported that faculty in their unit were actively engaged in mentoring students in undergraduate research and creative activities. The number of tenure-track faculty by department reported as engaging in faculty-mentored student research and creative activity ranged from 2 to 22. Excluding the library, all units (100%) reported that they offered courses

that provide undergraduate research opportunities. At the time of the survey, 42% of the units reported that they offered support for undergraduate research and creative activities. Only one unit reported that it had clear written expectations for undergraduate research; other units reported that they were working on developing more explicit expectations.

Office for Training, Research and Education in the Sciences

CSUSM's Office for Training, Research and Education in the Sciences ([OTRES](#)) offers another substantial example of sustained support for faculty-mentored student research, as well as additional evidence of CSUSM's focus on practices that develop students into critical thinkers capable of continued higher-order learning. OTRES provides a supportive multicultural environment for student and faculty career development in the biomedical sciences and related disciplines. OTRES sponsors programs that focus on science education, student support services, research training, and research participation, striving to make CSUSM the institution of choice for students interested in biomedical sciences and to equip them with the knowledge and skills required for successful careers in the sciences.

OTRES has been very successful in obtaining funding to implement programs for student education, training and participation in research; for faculty development; and for contributions to the educational mission of CSUSM, with beneficiaries across three CSUSM colleges. OTRES students perform original scientific research and present their findings at scientific meetings. They are introduced to a broad range of scientific disciplines and are provided with networking opportunities with representatives of some of the nation's top research universities. During the past 10 years, grants awarded to OTRES by federally funded student training programs such as [MARC](#), [RISE](#), [BRIDGES](#), and [LSAMP](#), have helped more than 400 OTRES students further their academic and research careers. OTRES graduates have

earned PhD and MS/MA degrees in a range of disciplines from prestigious universities. The graduation rate for OTRES students is an impressive 93%.



Students in STEM lab.

**THE
GRADUATION
RATE FOR
OTRES
STUDENTS
IS AN
IMPRESSIVE
93%.**

The University supports all STEM majors through Supplemental Instruction (SI) for STEM majors and CSUSM's STEM Center, discussed at greater length in Essay 4. Not only the students who attend SI sessions, but also those who lead them, stand to deepen their learning. As OTRES and support for STEM majors suggest, CSUSM's approach to the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees is intertwined with its mechanisms to support student

success—part of a collection of holistic and complementary frameworks and practices, with a continuing emphasis on high-impact practices associated with higher-order learning and development.

Globally and Culturally Intelligent (CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.6, 4.3)

CSUSM provides many avenues for students to learn to apply multiple perspectives to address local, regional, global, and cultural issues through HIPs such as internships and service learning. A recent [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) article reported that employers rank internships above major and college when hiring college graduates. CSUSM has many program-based internship opportunities as detailed in Appendix 3.1. For example, Biotechnology, Human Development, Kinesiology, Nursing, and Education

all have required internship/clinical practica. Most majors in CHABSS, as well as in Global Business Management, offer internships and clinical practica as options. In addition, several college-based initiatives designed to prepare students for the workforce—the [CHABSS Career Readiness Initiative](#), the [CoBA Business Professional Development Program](#), and the [COBA Senior Experience](#)—all provide students with access to professional mentoring and real-world experience. Campus-wide, a Student Placement Task Force and subsequent Implementation Team are currently looking into coordinating internships and placements. In 2015, the University created the [Office of Internships](#), housed in the Division of Community Engagement, with a faculty director reporting to the Vice President of Community Engagement and to the Provost.

CSUSM has a long history of facilitating meaningful student service learning experiences designed to connect service with community organizations to course content, and to provide students with guided course-based opportunities to reflect on the meaning of their service. Students have performed service learning through the office of [Community Service Learning](#) at 279 sites in 75 cities in the region, with 2,126 students logging 74,810 hours of service in 2013-14 in 202 different sections of 71 courses. Community service learning occurs more informally in many courses, as evidenced by 76% of NSSE 2014 senior respondents reporting in 2014 that they had taken at least one course that included a community-based project. In addition, 75% of seniors reported completing or planning to complete an internship or field experience (see Appendix 3.2). CSUSM’s Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, noted in Essay 1, attests to CSUSM’s strong commitment to the institutional practice of community engagement that sets the stage for the University’s graduates to work and engage in their local and regional communities.

**THE UNIVERSITY
HOSTS A
GROWING
PRESENCE OF
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS,
CURRENTLY
REPRESENTING
45 COUNTRIES.**

Students have ample opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills needed to engage globally, a core element of the University’s mission. The [Office of Global Education](#) facilitates study abroad for over 200 CSUSM students each year through a number of summer, semester, or year-long programs. The University hosts a growing presence of international students, currently representing 45 countries. Foreign students are earning degrees (306 in fall 2013, up from 179 in 2012) or learning English through the [American Language and Culture Institute](#). Several additional initiatives, programs, and centers support student global engagement, including the Global Commitment and Engaging Diverse Dialogues Initiatives, the Global Studies program, the Cross-Cultural Center, the Language Learning Center, and several student organizations (including the Global Studies Club, the French Club, Model United Nations, and Global Connections).

CSUSM has numerous programs and initiatives designed to prepare students to engage in diverse local, regional, and global communities. For example, the [CHABSS Engaging Diverse Dialogues Initiative](#) (EDDI) is designed to encourage a culture of diversity and inter-disciplinary collaboration through meaningful dialogues in the college, across the campus community, and in the region. EDDI was created to foster sustainable culturally intelligent practices and to develop a plan for multi-semester discussions and events. To promote these goals, the EDDI Task Force is working to position CHABSS as an agent of positive social change. EDDI has co-sponsored renowned speakers on campus, promoted discussions of difficult topics, and created educational materials to accompany co-curricular activities.

Another key focus for this ULO is CSUSM’s focus on individual and cultural diversity, including race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, age, and the experiences of historically under-represented and/or marginalized groups. From mission statements and program learning outcomes to the scaffolding of student learning within and across the curriculum, in-

stitutional practices reiterate the importance and value of diversity. As part of [CSUSM's Strategic Plan for Diversity and Educational Equity](#), in 2014 the campus contracted with [Halualani & Associates](#) to assess the inclusion of the value of diversity throughout the University by carrying out a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative [diversity mapping study](#) across the entire campus. According to Halualani & Associates:

“Diversity mapping refers to a process of plotting out and analyzing (via 16-18 data layers) all of the current diversity efforts, programs, and courses at your institution.”

Following the completion of the mapping process, a series of forums was held on campus during the week of February 16, 2015. Forty attendees completed surveys. The University synthesized data from the mapping process and the survey results to compose a list of [recommendations and an action matrix](#). The consensus across constituent groups who completed the survey, the Diversity Mapping Steering Committee, and the Ad Hoc Leadership Team was that recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and staff and strengthening diversity content in the curriculum should be campus priorities. Among the many tasks the University will undertake, a revised and updated Diversity Strategic Plan will be created to guide CSUSM to develop a comprehensive strategy and vision for diversity and educational equity that will result in an optimal deployment of resources and talent to meet the growing needs of a diverse university community and region.

Results from the 2013 College Senior Survey (Appendix 3.3) demonstrate CSUSM's success in promoting the value of diversity to its students. Compared to other participating campuses, CSUSM respondents are more likely to report positive cross-racial interactions such as having “meaningful interaction with students from other racial/ethnic groups.” Fewer than 10% of CSUSM respondents report

having negative interactions. CSUSM respondents are also more likely to consider it essential or very important to help promote racial understanding and more than four out of five respondents rate themselves as above average in their empathy, tolerance, and cooperativeness with people who are different from themselves. Much like respondents at other universities, a majority of CSUSM respondents say they have socialized or studied with someone of another racial/ethnic group. The 2014 NSSE shows that senior respondents at CSUSM are much more likely than those at other participating campuses to say that CSUSM encourages contact among students from different backgrounds, particularly among freshmen (see Appendix 3.4). Three-quarters of freshmen and 60% of seniors say

their college experience has contributed to their understanding of people of other backgrounds.

SKILL IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF A CSUSM DEGREE FROM THE START THROUGH THE ALL-UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENT

Skilled Communicators **(CFRs 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 4.3)**

A student's ability to communicate clearly and effectively is integral to the meaning, quality, and strength of a degree. Developing communication skills is a core ULO and a foundational building block of curriculum. Effective

communication is an outcome specifically included in the majority of undergraduate and graduate PSLOs. Communication learning outcomes, for example, translate into assignments and projects such as the College of Business Administration's Senior Experience Program, which tasks students with working on consulting projects for local businesses. The projects culminate in a formal presentation at the end of the semester, a written report, and a trade show where project results are publicly displayed. Since its inception, more than 1,500 Senior Experience projects have been very successfully researched, written, and presented. CSUSM students regularly translate the emphasis on oral communication into enhancing the quality of their degrees through presenting original research at conferences. According to the spring 2013 CUGR *State of Faculty-Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity at CSUSM*, “all units report that their

undergraduates have opportunities to present research at local, regional, or national (and international) symposia, conferences, or professional meetings.” For years, the vast majority of CSUSM seniors responding to the NSSE have reported gains in their oral communication skills. Seniors at CSUSM are more likely than seniors at similar campuses to report frequently giving class presentations. Similarly, longitudinal results of the CSS show a 10% increase in respondents’ confidence in their oral communication skills.

Skill in written communication has been an integral part of a CSUSM degree from the start through the [All-University Writing Requirement](#), which is required at the graduate level as well. CSUSM’s emphasis on writing, which sets the stage for another HIP, that of writing-intensive courses, is also reflected in General Education Learning Outcomes. Essay 4 discusses oral and written communication skills at length, in the context of assessment of WASC-identified Core Competencies.

Graduate Programs and Degrees (CFRs 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3)

CSUSM has 14 graduate programs spread across the four colleges, serving more than 300 FTES each semester (205 stateside, and an estimated 125 through Extended Learning). The Office of Graduate Studies and Research ([OGSR](#)) provides support and coordination for graduate programs in a number of ways.

- OGSR coordinates the Graduate Studies Council, which meets monthly to address issues shared across graduate programs. Each program has a coordinator who sits on the council and serves as a liaison between OGSR, the programs, and the students. The council also communicates through an active community webpage.
- Graduate programs are also supported by a staff member who organizes a number of graduate program and student events during the year and helps to process the documentation associated with graduate policies.

- In 2015-16, OGSR began offering graduate fellowships to encourage the top applicants to the University’s programs to choose CSUSM, as well as to accelerate time to degree for admitted students.

- OGSR provides travel support for graduate students through partial funding to attend and present their work at a professional conference.

While the campus works further to align learning at the graduate level with the development and implementation of Graduate Learning Outcomes, it is important to note that graduate programs at CSU San Marcos have already aligned with campus mechanisms to ensure the quality and integrity of degrees through their participation in annual programmatic assessment activity. Each graduate program has PSLOs that are measured annually. These individual PSLOs will be reviewed and used by the Graduate Studies Council as the foundation for building the overarching GLOs.

Even though participation in the regular submission of annual assessment plans and reports has fluctuated over the last five years, the campus has ultimately achieved consistent submission across programs. In addition, graduate programs have used assessment-related data to inform programs and make improvements to requirements, curriculum, content, delivery modes, etc. Highlights of these improvements include rearranging how or when content is delivered (MBA), additions to syllabi (MA Education), and adding measurement tools to capture a broader picture of the learning (MS Nursing). A complete chart highlighting all assessment activities in the graduate programs from 2010 through 2015 (only plans will be submitted for 2015; final reports will not be submitted until spring 2016) can be found in Appendix 6.9. Essay 6 elaborates on assessment practices, findings, and plans for improvement.

Like CSUSM’s undergraduate programs, graduate programs also have a writing requirement. The [Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement \(GWAR\)](#) provides uniform standards for writing proficiency across both undergraduate and graduate programs. The writing requirement must be completed before

a graduate student advances to candidacy and can be satisfied either through an acceptable standardized test score or a paper that receives a passing score based on an approved rubric. Papers are scored for style and format, mechanics, content and organization, and critical analysis. Each program must also maintain a remediation protocol for students who do not satisfy GWAR on their first attempt. To date, the GWAR has been effectively implemented across CSUSM's graduate programs. All have GWAR requirements on file, and each has established a remediation protocol.

The meaning, quality, and integrity of graduate work at CSUSM is articulated to the public through the dissemination of graduate scholarship via [ScholarWorks](#), the institutional repository for CSUSM. ScholarWorks is a full-text searchable, online database for the scholarship, research, and creative works created by the faculty, researchers, and students of CSUSM. ScholarWorks makes graduate student theses and dissertations freely available to anyone with access to the internet. This open access helps increase the visibility of sometimes hidden work, such as technical reports, theses, and dissertations. ScholarWorks showcases the research and scholarship being done by students and faculty, making it easier to demonstrate what CSUSM adds to the community in terms of scientific, social, and financial value.

Outcomes

A final factor to look at when assessing success in achieving the ULOs is the level of employment of CSUSM's graduates. For an institution that seeks to educate the whole student to become a productive member of society, employment is an important indicator of success, albeit not the only such indicator. The spring 2014 Institutional Planning and Analysis Alumni Survey (conducted through collaboration between the Career Center, the Division of Student Affairs, Graduate Programs, and Alumni Relations) provides some illustrative information on the success

of CSUSM's students after graduation (see Appendix 3.5). The survey found that 4 out of 5 graduates were employed but those who graduated in 2011 and after were more likely than earlier graduates to be working, at least, part-time (a national trend in a post-recession era with weak employment growth). Factors deemed important for finding jobs are backed up by the 2011 [CSU Career Directors Employer Survey](#) (see Appendix 3.6). In addition, of the 1,102 graduates who responded to the 2014 Graduation Survey distributed at four CSUSM commencement ceremonies, 60% are employed (41% full-time), 29% were looking for work, 13% were enrolled in graduate school and .6% were not seeking employment or further education. Ninety-six percent of employed 2014 graduates reported working in Southern California; 52% reported working in North County San Diego (Appendix 3.7). Future directions for making a more complete assessment of how well the University is preparing the students for the job market might include a regional employer survey to determine how well prepared CSUSM graduates are to work in this region as well as provide a more complete picture of what skills local employers are seeking.

Through the sustained collaborative effort resulting in approved University Learning Outcomes, this campus has reached a milestone in its work to articulate the meaning, quality, and integrity of a CSUSM degree. Each outcome both reflects the curricular and institution-wide practices and strengths of CSUSM and is supported by purposeful planning, data-gathering, and data-informed modifications. High-impact practices emerge as a strong foundation for the meaning, quality, and integrity of a CSUSM degree in the present and future of the institution.

**A FINAL
FACTOR TO
LOOK AT WHEN
ASSESSING
SUCCESS IN
ACHIEVING
THE ULOS IS
THE LEVEL OF
EMPLOYMENT
OF CSUSM'S
GRADUATES.**

4 Educational Quality:

Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation (CFRs 2 .2, 2 .4, 2 .6, 2 .7, 4 .3)

CSUSM strives to cultivate graduates who, not only meet the needs of the region, but also excel with the essential learning outcomes identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and American Promise ([LEAP](#)). These learning outcomes are the foundation for the campus's Undergraduate Learning Outcomes ([ULOs](#), discussed in Essay 3) and General Education Program Student Learning Outcomes ([GEPSLOs](#)). They align with the WASC-identified framework of five Core Competencies-written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking. These Core Competencies comprise the essential knowledge, skills and abilities that students should have at graduation. CSUSM student learning with respect to the Core Competencies, as measured through student performance, is the core of educational quality at CSUSM, as highlighted by examples of student learning in relation to key outcomes at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Learning-centeredness is embedded across the institution through high-impact practices (HIPs) as well as in the steps CSUSM has taken to close achievement gaps.

Core Competencies and General Education Student Learning Outcomes (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)

In its ongoing commitment to support teaching and learning and further institutionalize assessment, CSUSM has convened an inclusive and diverse group of faculty, staff, and administrators at a Discovery

Café, an Institutional Learning Outcomes Task Force, a Quality of the Degree Team, and a Core Competency Team (CCT). The CCT is comprised of faculty from across campus: a former WASC ALO and General Education Assessment Coordinator; the Director of General Education Writing (GEW); the Director of the Information Literacy Program (ILP) at CSUSM's Library; the General Education Oral Communication (GEO) Coordinator; the Director of First-Year Programs (FYP); and faculty from Philosophy and Mathematics. During academic year 2013-14, the CCT designed and began implementing a plan to assess the five core competencies in general education and major courses.

The CCT's plan for assessment began with written communication in spring 2014. The decision to begin with written communication was informed by the National Survey of Student Engagement ([NSSE](#)), in which CSUSM seniors identified clear and effective writing as a distinguishing characteristic of their education, a result that highlights CSUSM's [All University Writing Requirement](#):

An emphasis on writing, across the curriculum, has long been one of the strengths of CSUSM, and distinguishes its learning experiences from those of comparable institutions. As the NSSE data reflect, students confirm it as a distinctive and positive aspect of their experience at CSUSM. Beginning with the assessment of this Core Competency allowed the campus to gather additional authentic evidence on written

communication at CSUSM and learn more about this distinctive aspect of the CSUSM experience.

The process for assessing written and oral communication was inclusive and collaborative, with faculty representing a variety of disciplines building the rubrics and a different group of faculty enlisted to score the Essays. This level of participation at the planning and implementation stages helps broaden faculty understanding of the University's assessment efforts. The total sample size for the written communication assessment was 122 papers (39 from GE, 83 from senior-level major courses). Overall, the majority of students met the minimum standard for each criterion, with greatest strengths in the criteria of purpose and audience/voice.

The CCT shared the assessment data with various entities across campus, including all college deans and the University Assessment Council (UAC). Conversations have begun to engage important questions about how this snapshot of CSUSM's graduating seniors' written communication skills can help faculty revisit their own classroom practices, aid departments/programs in examining how they support writing in their curriculum, and help the University reevaluate the curricular structures that support writing across the disciplines. In other words, CSUSM's assessment of the Core Competencies is already providing important opportunities for "closing the loop" to improve institutional support for students' achievement of these competencies in their learning experiences at this institution.

The CCT recruited an even larger sample size of 241 samples of in-class student presentations for the oral communication assessment in fall 2014. In spring 2015 the team chose to combine critical thinking and information literacy in the assessment. Six faculty members from six different courses scored 109 assignments (99 written, 10 oral). One course was from the general education program (n = 28). Highlights from all three completed assessments are as follows (complete reports are in appendix 4.1):

- Spring 2014 – Written Communication - 92.6% of students passed with a 2 on all 4 criteria.
- Fall 2014 – Oral Communication - 59.4% of students scored 3 or higher on all 5 criteria. 66.4% of students scored 3 or higher on 4 criteria (presentation aids omitted).
- Spring 2015 – Information Literacy and Critical Thinking - 72.5% to 94.2% of graduates met the minimum standard ("effective") for CT/IL on any one criterion; less than 2/3 of our graduating seniors (62.4%) meet the minimum standard on all four criteria.

The team is researching methodologies and rubrics for the assessment for quantitative reasoning, planned for fall 2015.

CSUSM's General Education Program Student Learning Outcomes (GEPSLOs) are rooted in the LEAP core competencies mentioned above, with GEPSLOs #3, 5 and 6 on written communication, oral communication, and information literacy already required in all GE courses. In keeping with the current California State University [Executive Order 1100](#) on the GE Breadth Requirement, the General Education Committee (GEC) brought GEPSLOs to the Academic Senate in spring 2014. GEC's next step is to begin curriculum mapping of these GEPSLOs across the GE courses—specifically, upper division courses—to demonstrate that these student learning outcomes are being addressed across the curriculum. See Appendix 6.5 for a full GE assessment plan.

Evidence of Undergraduate Student Learning (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.3)

CSUSM uses a wide range of strategies to confirm that students meet key learning outcomes, particularly at the programmatic level.

Example 1: Biology

One example is the Biology Department's work to assure that its majors learn to

“apply quantitative reasoning to analyze and solve complex problems” (ULO 2b).

Supported by a National Institutes of Health SMARC Curriculum Improvement Grant for 2008-2013, CSUSM faculty modified a total of 17 Biology courses, 6 Chemistry courses, 3 Mathematics courses, 2 Physics courses, and 2 Computer Science courses to increase quantitative and computational concepts and analyses related to the Biological Sciences. All of the modified courses are requirements or electives for Biology majors, ensuring that students in the major are introduced to quantitative reasoning and analysis early in their college careers, and that key concepts are reinforced multiple times during their coursework.

A summary of the quantitative and computational modifications made to a single course (BIOL 210) is included in Appendix 4.2. Although evaluation of project assessment data is ongoing, student knowledge surveys have suggested substantial gains in student confidence with quantitative and computational concepts after completing modified coursework (Appendix 4.3).

Beyond individual course modifications, another outcome of this project was the development of a new Quantitative and Computational Biology Minor, offered for the first time in fall 2014. Thus, targeted and thoughtful efforts are underway to strengthen quantitative reasoning and problem solving in the Biological Sciences, and these efforts are representative of a broader university-wide commitment to assure that CSUSM students meet key learning outcomes.

Example 2: Business

Another programmatic assessment example is in the College of Business Administration which, in conjunction with seven other CSU campuses, uses a Business Assessment Test (CSU-BAT) to assess student-learning outcomes in business classes from accounting to management and marketing. In spring 2012, the annual assessment report for the BS in Business Administration noted that the average scores on the CSU-BAT were the highest that CSUSM students have received since the University began participating in the assessment in 2005.

Example 3: Senior Experience

A further demonstration of student learning is the Capstone Senior Experience for Business students (a multi-dimensional example of a HIP, as it is both a capstone and a course distinguished by collaborative learning). In an intensive, integrated course, teams of students apply the knowledge gained from their coursework to a consulting project with a real-world business, proposing solutions to a problem faced by that business partner. For example, Senior Experience teams identified areas to [increase sustainability efforts](#) of the local, eco-conscious Stone Brewery.

Additional evidence of student learning is gathered at the institutional level through three national surveys that CSUSM administers: the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA CIRP [Freshmen Survey](#) (TFS), administered to incoming first-year students, [the College Senior Survey](#) (CSS), and the National Survey of Student Engagement ([NSSE](#)). These

Table 4.1

2014 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

<i>My college education has contributed "very much or quite a bit" to my knowledge and skills in the following areas</i>	Freshmen Respondents		Senior Respondents	
	Cal State San Marcos	Other CSU Campuses	Cal state San Marcos	Other CSU Campuses
Thinking critically and analytically	88%	78%	86%	84%
Writing clearly and effectively	81%	70%	79%	73%
Speaking clearly and effectively	83%	78%	71%	70%
Analyzing numerical & statistical information	66%	58%	68%	65%
Estimated number of assigned pages of student writing	63	42	95	82
Often/Very often gave a course presentation	62%	45%	63%	62%

surveys provide insight into how students self-report on their skills on written and oral communication skills, and the time in college spent writing and presenting. NSSE 2014 responses illustrate CSUSM students' assessment of their writing and speaking skills compared to other participating CSUs (see table 4.1).

Because the campus administers both the Freshmen Survey and the Senior Survey, the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA is able to provide responses to both surveys by the same students at these two different points in their college careers. As was the case in 2009 and 2011, the results for the spring 2013 Senior Survey (see Appendix 4.4) show that the percentage of CSUSM respondents who rated their written and oral communication as “above average/highest 10%” increase substantially between their freshman and senior years:

- Writing ability: 48% of freshmen vs. 66% of seniors
- Public speaking ability: 33% of freshmen vs. 42% of seniors

As part of a system-wide initiative, CSUSM also administers the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to incoming freshmen and graduating seniors each year. The CLA is designed to “measure an institution’s contribution, or value added, to the development of higher-order-skills” such as critical thinking and written communication. In spring 2014, 65 seniors took the test and results show that CSUSM’s total “Value-Added Percentile Rank” was better than 80% of other participating campuses (Appendix 4.5). The data from these surveys, in particular when comparing freshmen to seniors, indicate growth and student learning at graduation. CSUSM continues to look for areas in which to institutionalize assessment further from the programmatic level on up, a topic addressed more fully in Essay 6.

Evidence of Graduate Student Learning (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)

During the process of establishing CSUSM’s Institutional Learning Outcomes (now called Under-

graduate Learning Outcomes or ULOs, described in Essay 3), the distinction between undergraduate and graduate student learning outcomes became clearer. Beyond the core competencies, there are consistent themes within the University’s graduate programs that may eventually inform the foundation for graduate student learning outcomes (GLOs) at CSUSM. Collectively, graduate programs are committed to outcomes such as 1) development of professionalism and career readiness, 2) community engagement, 3) ethical and responsible practice, and 4) producing scholars.

One example of the manifestation of developing professionalism, career readiness, and community engagement in graduate study at CSUSM is from the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP)⁴. Graduates entering the field of SLP are expected to develop knowledge and skills in nine main areas of clinical practice, first learning content knowledge in the classroom and then through field placements where students develop their clinical skills through direct service provision. Through community



Speech Language clinic opening.

collaborations with the San Marcos Unified School District and Palomar Pomerado Health and Learning Services (a residential center for individuals with brain injury), faculty take students into the field for scaffolded skill development in ecologically valid settings.

As part of the language disorders and swallowing disorders courses, students are provided with ample opportunity in the course to practice language and swallow evaluations on one another. They then

⁴ Formerly offered as a Master of Arts in Education, Option in Communicative Sciences and Disorders (CSD).

apply their knowledge and skills to volunteer residents at the center. The students gain vital experience with reviewing patient charts, conferring with nursing staff, charting, and providing oral reports during this exercise. This provides a real-world opportunity for students to begin applying professional practice to the knowledge and skills they are developing in class.

The program uses low-stakes assessment measures for this assignment in that students are provided with significant feedback on their written charting and their oral presentations without a final grade, to emphasize process. The feedback from this activity is expected to be used in subsequent settings and is assessed more formally at that time. Reflections from students and off-site supervisors have been overwhelmingly positive. As one student put it,

“As an SLP graduate student I have been provided examples of how various clinicians “swim,” informed how one’s “arms and legs should move” in order to obtain the intended result, and have been allowed to practice on my colleagues, but until I had experienced working with members of the community with communication difficulties, I felt myself to be at a disadvantage [...] My experience at Villa Pomerado has provided me with increased confidence in my clinical abilities due to hands-on experience with clients who have true communication difficulties (at times with one or more concomitant factors), the otherwise inaccessible insight into my clinical style, and both spoken and unspoken reassurance by CSUSM faculty that I have their support and am developing the skills necessary to swim on my own.”

Other graduate programs such as Social Work, Business Administration, Psychology, and Sociological Practice utilize similar community engagement strategies, using hands-on application of content

knowledge in real-world settings that enhance student learning, career readiness, and professionalism while working collaboratively with community partners.

Closing Achievement Gaps (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.3, 4.4)

One third of incoming CSUSM freshman students are the first in their family to attend college. Many incoming students are also deficient in math and writing skills, with more than 30% requiring math remediation before taking a college-level math course and more than 40% requiring writing remediation before taking a college-level English course. The CSUSM [Office of First-Year Programs](#) (FYP) coordinates a diverse group of activities designed to help new students transition more effectively to the academic and social norms of college.

GEL 101

Central to this effort is the General Education Lifelong Learning (GEL) 101 course “The Student, The University, The Community,” which is taken by approximately 80% of first-year freshman students. This course explores the time management, writing, and study skills integral to success in college and helps

students to investigate career options associated with their major. FYP also coordinates a range of first-year learning communities (another example of a HIP), in which students enroll in at least two linked courses, one of which is a section of GEL 101.

Each first-year learning community addresses a unique theme (e.g. Global Learning, Business) both inside and outside of the classroom. Even before students begin their first official semester at CSUSM, summer programs are offered that assist first-year students with achieving the proficiency requirements in English and math. Examples are the Summer Academy and Mathematics Acceleration Program in the Summer (MAPS). Collectively, these programs have helped improve freshman

**“MY EXPERIENCE AT
VILLA POMERADO
HAS PROVIDED ME
WITH INCREASED
CONFIDENCE IN MY
CLINICAL ABILITIES
DUE TO HANDS-
ON EXPERIENCE
WITH CLIENTS...”**

one-year continuation rates from 60% (2000) to 82% (2013) and transfer student one-year continuation rates from 78% (2000) to 86% (2013). See appendices 4.6 and 4.7 for further data. Essay 5 offers additional discussion of the impact of FYP.

Supplemental Instruction

Another example of closing the achievement gap on campus is the [Supplemental Instruction](#) (SI) program in the sciences, noted in Essay 3. Specific lower-division classes covering conceptually difficult material (e.g. calculus, first-semester general chemistry, and first-semester molecular/cellular biology) typically have a high student failure rate. This is a nationwide problem, and these courses can act as a significant barrier to student success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) majors, leading to decreased retention, changes in major, and/or increased time to degree.

While a variety of strategies and course modifications within the classroom have been carried out to help improve student performance in these classes, SI may have the most impact. SI is designed to help students in historically difficult classes master course content while they develop and integrate new learning and study strategies. SI leaders are students nominated by faculty and paid for their work. The leaders are trained in active learning strategies, attend all course lectures, and



Students working in the STEM Center.

conduct biweekly student-centered review sessions that are open to all students in a particular course. At CSUSM, the SI program focuses on 11 historically difficult science courses, and in the past year

the program has reached more than 700 students with more than 5000 total student contact hours.

The results of the SI program at CSUSM have been striking. Students who attend SI sessions have approximately 40% lower fail rates than non-participants, and their course performance is typically a full grade point higher than non-participants. Although the SI program was initially supported at CSUSM primarily through external grant funding (as a component of a National Institutes of Health RISE grant), the program has been fully funded by the University since 2007. Overall, the SI program provides a model of the University's approach to addressing achievement gaps: establish fledgling student support programs using either internal or external funds, quantitatively assess student outcomes, and institutionalize programs which substantially improve student performance and help to "close the achievement gap" and reduce time to graduation.

STEM Center

CSUSM's [STEM Center](#) provides additional support for STEM majors. The STEM Center is a welcoming learning community where peer tutors help students develop the skills and self-confidence they need to succeed in science and mathematics. The Center is a key component of a recent CSUSM initiative to increase the number of students receiving degrees in STEM fields. It supports College of Science and Mathematics students by providing study space, peer tutors, workshops, and academic and career information; and also serves as the hub for [STEM-related outreach activities](#), and the STEM Librarian conducts office hours in the STEM Center.

Improving Teaching and Learning Through Assessment (CFRs 2.7, 4.1)

Along with a number of other processes that support educational quality, the University makes use of faculty performance evaluation review and program review in order to improve teaching and learning. Probationary tenure track faculty are required to submit an annual Working Personnel Action File (WPAF) in which they

discuss and reflect upon their teaching, as well as their scholarship, creative activities, and service.

The faculty narrative statement in the WPAF is expected to include a critical analysis of student feedback from course evaluations and a self-reflection. As part of this process, the probationary faculty member should explain the steps that he/she will take to improve instructional practices. This WPAF is then reviewed by a department/college level Peer Review Committee (PRC) (may also include a separate department chair review), college dean, and depending on the level of review, the Promotion and Tenure Committee (PTC), and the Provost.

In periodic review years (1st, 3rd, 5th), the review ends at the college dean level. In years where the review is for retention (2nd, 4th and 6th years), the WPAF is reviewed at all levels. At each level of review, probationary faculty members are provided developmental, formative feedback that includes recommendations for improved instructional practices. All WPAF review letters become part of the faculty member's Personnel Action File (PAF) and any subsequent WPAF, and are considered in the next year's review. As such, probationary faculty members are held accountable for implementing their own proposed changes and the recommendations from reviewers.

Tenured faculty members undergo a five year periodic performance evaluation, which includes a review by the department/college level PRC and the college dean. In addition, lecturers have periodic evaluations, which include student evaluations. Lecturers with one semester appointments or part-time one year appointments submit a WPAF that is reviewed by the department chair. Lecturers with full-time one-year appointments, lecturers eligible for an initial three-year contract or three-year contract lecturers in the third year of their contract submit a WPAF to the college dean's office. It is reviewed by a department/college level PRC and the dean of the college.

Another way that CSUSM improves teaching and learning is by acting on assessment findings to modify practices ("closing the loop"). In the Master of Arts program in Education, faculty hold two annual

weeklong retreats to reflect on and analyze survey data from current students, alumni, supervisors, and employers, as well as collective observations over the performance of students towards program learning outcomes. Based on survey data from students and supervisors, faculty noted a protracted timeline for the student development of professional writing skills. As a result of these assessment findings, the program developed a writing workshop to provide early preparation for incoming graduate students.

In spring 2014, prior to the start of their first semester, graduate students attended the first component of the workshop on how to read and dissect a research study with particular focus on the style and format, mechanics, content and organization, and synthesis and critical analysis. In June and July, students completed online writing assignments in which they deconstructed an article and then wrote an argumentative piece aimed at convincing an audience of their position. These papers were then graded on a rubric related to four focus elements that include faculty created lesson plans for common areas needing improvement. Finally, the students engaged in a revision process based on the lessons provided. The data from this first application has not yet been reviewed. The subjective feedback from students has been positive however.

Further evidence of improving teaching and learning based on assessment comes from the four degree programs submitted for WASC Substantive Change approval. In spring 2014, the proposals of three existing programs - the BA in Sociology, the BA in Criminology and Justice Studies, and the BA in Social Sciences; and one new online program option, the BS in Nursing (RN to BSN option) - were all approved (see appendices 4.8-4.10 for Substantive Change Reports from existing programs). In the case of the three existing programs, faculty discovered that course expansion over time made it possible for students to complete 50% or more of their major requirements through online and hybrid courses, which required formal WASC consideration. Upon their approval of the programs, WASC reviewers praised the departments involved for taking their program reviews seriously and using them to determine that substantive change applications were necessary. In

addition, the reviewers were pleased that faculty used prior assessments to consider how pedagogical and assessment design could best address the changes to their delivery methods and expansion of their programs.

Learning-Centeredness Across the Institution (CFRs 4.1-4.3)



Students work in community garden.

Faculty, staff, and students at CSUSM take learning-centeredness seriously, as evidenced by multiple, often intersecting, campus efforts. The [Office of Service Learning](#) and the [Office of Internships](#) (both in the Division of Community Engagement) create opportunities for experiential learning that strengthen the University's connection with the greater community while providing students with experiences that bridge the learning that happening inside the classroom with the learning happening outside the classroom.

In courses that include the Service Learning pedagogy, students are paired with non-profit organizations and conduct meaningful and planned community service work that is substantively related to course content. Through reflective activities, students enhance their understanding of course content, general knowledge, sense of civic responsibility, self-awareness, and commitment to the community. As one student noted: "In reflecting on my service learning, I was able to connect what I learned during this time to material that was learned in class and it helped me realize the difference I was making and

how applicable the course material is on a local scale."

Internship courses formally integrate the student's academic study with practical experience in a cooperating organization. Internships are designed specifically to offer experience in a business, non-profit, government or other workplace setting, and thus provide students with an invaluable career preparation opportunity in which they gain additional knowledge about graduate school and future work directions.

The Offices of Service Learning and Internships provide faculty with training and special resources to help enhance students' learning experiences, as well as work to facilitate the administrative and operational processes. The current list of CSUSM Service Learning and Internship community partners includes over 400 sites. As essay 3 notes, Service Learning and Internships are both examples of HIPs that are increasingly distinguishing CSUSM as a new kind of public university

The Faculty Center

[The Faculty Center](#), under the leadership of a faculty director, provides additional professional development opportunities for faculty who are interested in improving their methods of instruction. [Numerous workshops and lectures](#) are offered each academic year on a variety of pedagogical topics by the Faculty Director, CSUSM faculty, and guest facilitators, such as a Spring 2014 workshop, "Teaching in the 21st Century." In addition, the Faculty Center runs a Faculty Mentoring Program that pairs first-generation and economically-challenged college students with faculty members across the University in mentoring relationships. The program is focused upon building supportive relationships between faculty and students that will help build students' educational resilience and their academic skills. Faculty mentors and stu-



A faculty mentoring program meeting.

dents are paired based upon their areas of expertise and major area of study, which facilitates the communication of discipline-specific advice between them.

The Civility Campaign

A campus-wide effort known as the Civility Campaign addresses some of the overarching social factors that affect student learning. This campaign, which has been in effect since 2012, is an effort to create a safe, supportive environment for the campus community through curriculum and events stressing care, mutual respect, and empathy; its centerpiece is a student pledge to support those values.

Arts and Lectures

Other instructionally-related activities outside of the classroom also reinforce learning in the classroom and the University's goal of promoting a well-rounded educational experience. The [Arts and Lectures Series](#) is a yearly series of 20-30 events, including lectures, films, performances, concerts, book readings, and scientific discussions that draw upon the expertise of scholars and artists. These events are often used as touchstones for discussions inside and outside of class time in order to deepen students' comprehension of course concepts (see Appendix 4.11).

Context Library Series

The [Context Library Series](#) presents art and visual representations of a given theme in an exhibit on the main floor of the library and a number of learning-centered activities, such as lectures by the artists, attendance at expert panels, and activities/assignments that are integrated into the coursework of participating classes (this link provides information on [all previous exhibits](#)). For example, the exhibits from the 2013-14 academic year, *The Uterus Flag Project* and *More than a Fence: (de)Constructing Mexico/US Borders*, inspired scholarly discussions related to a wide-ranging number of disciplines, including feminist studies, health studies, ethnic studies, sociology, visual arts, communication, and law. The spring 2015 exhibit "Beyond the Stereotypes" not only engaged library users but was also linked to resources for individual

learning (scholarly articles, videos) and for teaching (curricular modules) and to public events like the student workshop "Bindis, Blackface, Cholos, and Cornrows: Exploring Stereotypes and Cultural Misappropriation," part of an ongoing ["Conversations that Matter"](#) series coordinated by the [Office of Diversity, Educational Equity, Inclusion and Ombuds Services](#).

Symposium on Student Research

Another example of learning-centeredness comes from the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, which hosts the annual [Symposium on Student Research, Creative Activities, and Innovation](#), which allows selected undergraduate and graduate students across the University to present their scholarly work to a panel of professional expert judges. Each year a group of up to ten finalists is chosen to compete in the statewide CSU competition. Historically, CSUSM finalists often place first or second in their divisions at the competition. Students benefit [by increasing their knowledge in their field](#) as they learn from their peers across the CSU system. Other similar opportunities for students to present their scholarly work include the Council for Undergraduate Research's bi-annual [Student Poster Showcase](#), and discipline-specific events, such as the Psychology Research Fair, the Global Studies Research Fair, and the Nu Epsilon Research Fair in Human Development.

From establishing undergraduate learning outcomes to assessing core competencies, CSUSM has built an infrastructure to lessen achievement gaps and help undergraduate and graduate students not only achieve key learning outcomes aligned with WASC Core Competencies, but also participate in a high-quality, high-engagement, high-impact learning experience.



5 Student Success: Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation (CFRs 1.2, 2.7, 2.13)

Commitment to Access

Enrollment in college is an important first step in access to higher education. Once students cross this threshold, access must become an active institutional principle enacted in practical and diverse modes of support for students' continuing success as students, engaged citizens, lifelong learners, and thriving human beings. This Essay details the wide range of methods CSUSM uses to facilitate student success by helping students develop the skills to meet the unique challenges of college and by tailoring institutional support with attention to students, both as individuals and as members of communities.

In July 2014, CSUSM launched the Office of Undergraduate Studies.⁵ The Dean of Undergraduate Studies is charged with leading the campus' Graduation Initiative working towards our 2025 targets established by the Chancellor's Office; with chairing the Graduation Initiative Steering Committee; with scaling-up the undergraduate experience at CSUSM for the growing campus; and ultimately with maintaining impressive first-year retention rates, increasing second and third-year retention rates, reducing time-to-graduation rates, and increasing the graduation rate. To realize these important goals, the

Dean of Undergraduate Studies oversees First-Year Programs, serves as a GE advocate, works with the Alliance to Accelerate Excellence in Education in Community Engagement, promotes transfer student success, leads the campus in grant writing to secure funding to launch and support student success initiatives, and facilitates cross-campus partnerships to promote students' academic success (all of which are connected to the initiatives noted below).

Remediation (CFR 2.10, 2.12, 2.13)

Remediation is an aspect of the student experience that influences student retention and success. CSUSM has made great strides in improving [remediation rates](#)⁶ within a student's first year of college. In 2013-14, 2127 regularly-admitted first-year students entered CSUSM. Of those students, 55% (1202) needed English and/or math remediation broken down as follows:

- 17% (360 students) needed English remediation.
- 16% (340 students) needed math remediation.
- 23% (502 students) needed both English and math.

5 During the 13/14 academic year, the Provost charged a cross-divisional task force with offering recommendations for scaling-up the undergraduate experience at CSUSM. In response to the task force's recommendations, the Provost created the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

6 Remediation rates refer to the percentage of students needing remediation able to clear their remediation requirement in the first year.

By the end of the first year of college, 87% (1046) of these students were able to clear their remediation requirement successfully with the following break down:

- 92% (330 students) who needed English only.
- 92% (313 students) who needed Math only.
- 80% (403 students) who needed both.

Students of color and first-generation college students are grossly overrepresented among students needing remediation in English and math. CSUSM is proud of its success in supporting students who may otherwise be hindered by remediation requirements. Between 2006-07 and 2010-11, the remediation rates for Latino students (who made up the largest portion of CSUSM students needing remediation) increased from 68% to 88%. In addition, the remediation rates increased from 70% to 90% for African-American students, 79% to 98% for Asian and Pacific Islander students, and 67% to 94% for first-generation college students (who come into the University needing remediation at the highest rate). The remediation rates for Caucasian students also increased during this time period from 72% to 91%. Additionally, the remediation rate for women improved from 71% to 88% and rates for men improved from 74% to 90%. It should be noted that in 2011-2012, the CSU system reduced the cut-off score for English remediation, which also reduced the number of students requiring remediation.

In 2012-2013, Early Start was developed requiring incoming students to begin remediation during the summer before starting in a CSU. These changes resulted in a lower proportion of incoming first-year students needing remediation in English and mathematics. In 2011-12,

- 58% of incoming first-year students needed remediation'
- 57% in 2012-13,
- and 56% in 2013-14.

During these time periods, remediation rates for African American students increased from 80% in 2011-12 to 82% in 2013-14, 90% in 2011-12 to 92% in 2013-14 for Asian American and Pacific Islander students, and remained at 86% from 2011-12 to 2013-14 for Latino students. Remediation rates for male students increased from 83% in 2011-12 to 85% in 2013-14, and 84% to 88% for female students from 2011-12 to 2013-14. Also, remediation rates for first-generation college students increased from 82% in 2011-12 to 85% in 2013-14. These improvements in the remediation rates at CSUSM directly impact CSUSM's mission to provide access to higher education for students who may not otherwise be afforded this opportunity, and also increase [first-year student retention rates](#) (Appendix 4.6).

Early Warning Initiatives (CFR 2.6, 2.10, 2.13)

CSUSM has implemented many programs and services to support the unique needs of the University's students and identify challenges as early as possible. The [Student Outreach and Referral \(SOAR\)](#) program was established after a 2010 Discovery Café identified that first-year students, particularly those who are first-generation (neither parent attended college), struggled to navigate the complexity of the University. SOAR, established in 2012 and housed in the Office of the Dean of Students, serves as a centralized resource for students and their families. The program is committed to providing individualized attention to facilitate personalized referrals to university resources. SOAR proactively connects with first-generation students and their families to raise awareness of campus resources and to promote a sense of belonging within the University community. In 2013-14, SOAR supported 536 cases; with enrollment growth, this number is anticipated to increase. The Office of the Dean of Students is working on developing a plan to assess SOAR's impact.

An example of a specific resource a student might connect with through SOAR is the [Personalized Academic Success Services \(PASS\)](#) program in CSUSM's Centers for Learning and Academic Success ([CLASS](#)). PASS provides ac-

ademic success workshops and individualized support to students who are experiencing challenges to their academic and personal success.

Another centralized resource provided by the Office of the Dean of Students is the [Cougar Care Network \(CCN\)](#), an early alert initiative to improve student success, retention, and persistence. CCN serves as a network of campus representatives who support students when there is an early alert referral from a member of the campus community. In 2014, a full time Care Manager was created to provide additional support to students experiencing personal challenges that may impact their academic and personal success. In 2015, faculty and staff were given an easy-to-see, easy-to-find red folder with contact information for student referrals and a decision tree to help them establish which resource to contact. The red folder is an example of the many ways in which the institution is refining and improving the coordination of various sources that support student needs and challenges.

Academic Support

Academic Advising (CFR 2.10, 2.12, 2.13)

CUSUM's current model for academic advising services supports access by students and is designed to create a positive impact on student persistence, retention, and satisfaction; all factors shown to directly influence student success and degree completion. Organizationally, the University delivers advising services through two college-based advising units, a Student Affairs-based advising unit, and advising done through Extended Learning in conjunction with the colleges.

The College of Business Administration advises undergraduate business majors. The College of Education, Health and Human Services (CEHHS) advises undergraduate students in the Integrated Credential program, Kinesiology, Nursing, and Human Development. Students enrolled in programs offered through Extended Learning (EL)⁷ receive

⁷ EL is the funding vehicle for programs when there are insufficient state resources to offer a program. The colleges, however, offer the curriculum in a manner equivalent to state supported programs.

advising through a partnership between the respective College and EL. These programs include:

- Bachelor of Arts in Criminology & Justice Studies (in Temecula)
- Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology, Health Science Option
- Bachelor of Science in Speech-Language Pathology
- Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN)
- RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Online (RN to BSN)
- Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
- Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MS SLP)
- Master of Public Health
- Master of Social Work
- Master in Health Information Management (HIM)

Students with majors in CHABSS and CSM (approximately 60% of all undergraduates) are served through the office of Undergraduate Advising Services (UAS), housed in the Division of Student Affairs. Faculty advisors in most majors provide additional advising services to students regarding major requirements, mentoring, internship, study abroad opportunities, and career and graduate school options.

UAS serves as a central coordination and communications channel for the college-based advising offices to keep communications streamlined for students. Its primary purpose is to assist students in the development and planning of their academic career. College-based advising services, EL, and UAS provide students with all the necessary information, resources, and training required to make meaningful education plans, coordinate with other offices on campus to provide the most comprehensive advising program possible, and to facilitate student access to

campus resources for effective and timely academic planning. College-based advising, EL, and UAS services promote student-advisor partnerships and shared responsibility for educational planning. Students are encouraged to seek advisement, actively participate in the decision-making process, and take control of progressing and completing their degree.

All advising units provide individual appointments focused on the development of educational plans. Advisors are also skilled at providing appropriate campus referrals to meet student needs. The largest volume of interaction with students is through scheduled individual appointments. An internal study conducted by Institutional Planning and Analysis in 2007 demonstrated that students who met with an academic advisor had a higher propensity to graduate compared to those that did not. In 2013-14, advisors conducted approximately 5,300 one-on-one scheduled appointments.

The implementation and gradual increase of drop-in services (no appointment necessary) also created additional advising access, which in turn helps to promote student success. Drop-in services are strategically marketed to target special populations (graduating seniors, veterans) to ensure timely degree completion. In 2013-14, advisors conducted approximately 3,450 individual drop-in advising sessions, and in 2014-15, advising units provided over 2,900 individual drop-in advising sessions to support access and timely degree planning. Academic advisors also provide advising to approximately 3,500 students each summer at new student orientations. Through these services alone, the University's advising units make over 12,000 face-to-face student contacts each academic year.

IITS has worked closely with campus advising offices to extend students' access to advising through online [eAdvising](#) tools (see Appendix 5.1 for Chancellor's Office memo documenting CSUSM's eAdvising projects). These online tools are available to students 24/7 and provide academic planning resources as well as data that help identify at-risk students needing intrusive advising. One eAdvising tool is the [Academic Requirement Report \(ARR\)](#), a compre-

hensive degree audit used by students and the Registrar's Office as the official graduation evaluation.

Since 2013, a number of new online planning tools have been implemented. The most recent eAdvising tool being implemented is the [Degree Planner](#), a course planning tool designed to assist students with developing long-term semester-by-semester plans for graduation using a dynamic course planner that interacts with the Academic Requirements Report. The tool identifies course requirements in need of completion and displays the courses in the order specified by the Academic Department to ensure course pre-requisites are taken early to facilitate a timely graduation. As more and more students use this new tool, the Degree Planner will provide university administration key course data to address course demand in a way that is not currently possible.

[Schedule Assistant](#) is an additional planning tool that allows students to input their own scheduling criteria, including desired breaks, athletic practice schedules, and work schedules. The Schedule Assistant works with the Degree Planner and helps students find all potential schedules for the semester for each course recommended by the Degree Planner for that term. This tool is expected to enhance student satisfaction and allow streamlined planning for both students and advisors. [IITS](#) and [UAS](#) websites also house a variety of training resources to support students' effective use of these online advising tools. Online advising tools provide students the ability to control and manage more aspects of their academic planning, exemplifying CSUSM's actions to increase students' active participation in their academic success.

Since the last WASC visit, UAS and college-based advising services have employed more strategic service delivery methods. Examples of these efforts include a communication plan developed to increase outreach efforts to students. Outreach to students has offered tips for finalizing class schedules, information about course withdrawal policies and deadlines, reminders about academic probation workshops, information about the reinstatement process and timelines, and updates regarding latest "how-to" resources. In addition, workshops offered to students through-

out the year (serving approximately 1300 students) have addressed common issues among majors such as first-year workshops for pre-health students detailing the complex requirements for entry into School of Nursing majors. These major-specific workshops have allowed advisors to focus primarily on students who have complex or problematic degree progress issues. Additional intrusive approaches to support student success include semester graduation reviews to inform students of outstanding requirements, outreach to students both on academic probation and close to probation, and the use of advising holds that foster and increase students' interactions with academic advisors (serving approximately 1622 students).

CSUSM continues to work to support advising strategically in multiple contexts across the University. For example, several CSUSM academic advisors are also adjunct instructors in the first-year General Education Lifelong Learning (GEL 101) course (discussed more fully in a later section of this Essay, as well as in Essay 4). GEL provides many students with the opportunity to interact with an academic advisor in a unique environment and allows academic advisors the opportunity to reach out to these student populations. UAS is currently cultivating a project to create online advising checklists and establish mandatory advising milestones for each academic level.

UAS and college-based advising services administer a variety of assessment instruments to monitor student success and satisfaction, including student satisfaction surveys in which students consistently rate their overall satisfaction with their academic advisors. Other assessments have been directed at finding out what modes of advising are most effective from the point of view of students. UAS conducted a "Preferred Methods" survey in fall 2013 to assess students' interest in online (including Skype-like advising) rather than face-to-face advising. The survey was distributed to current students who had met with an advisor as well as current students who had never been to see an advisor. Results were fairly conclusive in suggesting that students prefer in-person to online advising sessions. Even the students who had never met with an advisor said they would prefer face-to-face if they could get an appointment. While resources

have limited advising's ability to act on this data, UAS has already acted to "close the loop" by trying to offer more drop-in hours, allowing students to pick up cancellation slots when possible, and staying the course of offering scheduled face-to-face appointments.

UAS conducted a predictive analytics study of 2012 first-time freshmen that revealed some trends about specific potentially at risk students. The results seemed to indicate that four local "feeder" high schools produced a higher number of probationary-status students. Additional study and outreach efforts are now underway in an attempt to confirm if trends have continued in fall 2013 and fall 2014. Should a pattern be proven to exist, advising will consider focused outreach efforts to impact these students and their success rates. Another study - a collaboration between UAS and Personalized Academic Support Services (PASS) - seeks to assess the impact of outreach efforts to students on academic probation, a complex task given the challenge of comparing students on probation to students not on probation in context of outreach options and a host of other factors.

Campus advising units have employed various methods to provide all CSUSM undergraduate students with the opportunity to obtain personalized academic advising through scheduled appointments, drop-in services, advising at new student orientations, targeted workshops, and intrusive advising efforts. Students' increased use of new e-advising tools stands to enhance the schedule building and education planning processes. UAS will continue to monitor the impact of academic advising, including assessing the effects of specific delivery modes and target groups, as an important means to promote undergraduate students' access to academic and personal success.

Tutoring Centers (CFR 2.13)

In addition to advising services, students receive academic support through CSUSM's tutoring centers: Math Lab, Writing Center, and Language Learning Center. Table 5.1 illustrates the number of visits and completed tutoring hours for these centers.

Table 5.1

Student Visits and Completed Tutoring Hours for CSUSM Tutoring Centers

	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Student Visits	Completed Hours	Student Visits	Completed Hours	Student Visits	Completed Hours	Student Visits	Completed Hours	Student Visits	Completed Hours
Math Lab	10,305	13,549	13,168	17,595	15,283	19,183	16,036	20,988	19,354	25,784
Writing Center	2,178	1,109	3,254	1,551	3,174	2,202	3,921	2,985	5,195	4,136
Language Learning Center	1,761	1,995	2,803	2,980	3,716	4,171	3,574	4,392	1,743	1,563

As shown in Table 5.2, since 2009, student visits to the Math Lab and Writing Center have increased 88% and 139% respectively. Similarly, academic support needs have become apparent as illustrated by the number of tutoring hours completed in the Math Lab and Writing Center (increases of 90% and 273% respectively).

Table 5.2

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Student Visits and Completed Tutoring Hours from 2009-10 to 2013-14

	Student Visits	Completed Hours
Math Lab	88%	90%
Writing Center	139%	273%
Language Learning Center	-1%	-22%

The picture for the Language Learning Center is different. Between 2009 and 2012, student visits to this center increased by 103% and tutoring hours increased by 120%. However, in Spring 2013, the Language Learning Center was moved to a location that is less than half of its previous capacity. While this move freed up lab space for the Kinesiology program and brought together all the tutoring centers into one location in the library, it meant that the Language Learning Center had to greatly reduce the services it had been providing. As a result of the move and the reduced provision of services, student visits to the Language Learning Center decreased in the period between 2009-10 and 2013-14, and that decrease is even more pronounced when looking at the decrease between academic years 2012-13 and 2013-14 (student visits went down by 51% and tutoring hours went down by 64%).

Learning centers returned to Academic Affairs from Student Affairs July 2015. The learning center directors now report to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The STEM Center and Supplemental Instruction, both previously housed in the College of Science and Mathematics, moved to the Office of Undergraduate Studies in Academic Affairs (AA). This move to AA will create several opportunities: faculty partnerships with each center (a faculty fellow will be named for each center) which should strengthen academic ties to the centers, research about student learning connected uniquely to each center, and grant-writing to support individual centers and the centers as a collective group.

Support for Graduate Students (CFR 1.2, 2.6, 2.10)

While much of the support for student success has been focused on undergraduates, challenges specific to graduate students are also a concern for the University. As well as the many sources of support for their professional development as scholars, the Office of Graduate Study and Research (OGSR) addresses the needs of graduate students who have difficulty meeting the standard for written communication specified in the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). While most students are able to pass the GWAR on their first attempt (typically in the first semester of their graduate program), a few have required remediation. Students who struggle to pass the GWAR are most often international students or non-native English speakers. As a support mechanism for these students, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research has partnered with Global Education to

offer a non-credit GEAR course. Beginning in 2016-17, the GEAR course will be offered every semester.

Student Learning (CFR 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

CSUSM is committed to a holistic approach to student learning. CSUSM students are increasingly engaged in enriching curricular and co-curricular learning experiences, demonstrating the University's commitment to high-impact practices (HIPs) with documented positive effects on all students' academic and personal success, including the most at-risk. During the 14/15 academic year, the Office of Undergraduate Studies secured resources through a Chancellor's Office initiative, Preparing to Scale High-Impact Practices. This cross-divisional group is helping to build the campus infrastructure to increase student access to HIPs by defining CSUSM HIPs, by creating an inventory of all CSUSM HIPs, by analyzing (with IP&A's assistance) the HIPs to determine which HIPs have large-scale impact or could be scaled-up for large-scale impact, and by assessing HIP student participation.

First-Year Programs and Learning Communities (CFR 2.13)

The [Office of First-Year Programs](#) (FYP), in the Office of Undergraduate Studies, designs, implements and supports programs to help first-year students achieve academic excellence in the classroom and develop a deeper understanding of, and commitment to, long-term academic goals. The office is dedicated to helping students make a successful transition from the high school classroom to the academic world of higher education. The current goals of FYP are to have first-year students

- develop the foundational academic skills necessary to thrive in the Cal State San Marcos lower-division curriculum,
- understand university graduation requirements, including the All-University Writing Requirement and Language Other Than English Requirement,
- satisfy the CSU English and Mathematics Proficiency Requirements by the end of

their first year,

- develop and commit to a specific academic plan, and
- develop greater participation in the campus community and an increased sense of connection to fellow first-year students and faculty.

To support these goals, FYP administers an array of programs to support student learning and the professional development of instructors who teach first-year students. Beginning before the first year of college, FYP administers summer proficiency programs like the Mathematics Acceleration Program in the Summer (MAPS), a program that combines technology with face-to-face classroom learning. Since 2003, 1434 incoming first-year students have completed the five-week summer course and 35% (503 students) were college ready by fall and another 21% (298) students reduced the total number of remedial math courses necessary. Additional background and details on FYP is in Appendix 5.1.

FYP coordinates comprehensive college success courses such as GEL 101 (General Education Lifelong Learning), GEO 101 (General Education Oral Communication) and GEW 101 (General Education Writing). GEL 101 serves as a first-year success course. Enrollment in this first-year course is voluntary, although approximately 80% of first-year students complete the course. FYP also administers a growing number of First-Year Student Learning Communities (a recognized HIP). A report on the impact of GEL and learning communities at CSUSM, including disaggregated data, is in Appendix 5.3.

Recognizing that effective support for first-year students must include the instructors with whom they have frequent and foundational interactions, FYP has for the past five years conducted a very successful Conference for Instructors Who Teach First-Year Students, focused on best practices and effective strategies. The specific goal is to support adjunct faculty who teach many of the first-year courses. Participants are primarily lecturers and graduate students, but a fair number of tenure-track faculty attend as well. Appendix 5.4 includes reports on the conference.

Civic Engagement (CFR 2.13)

As discussed in Essay 3, [service learning](#) has continued to evolve as a significant HIP supporting students' academic, personal, and pre-professional success at CSUSM. Service learning is integrated into coursework with the assistance of the [Office of Civic Engagement](#). CSUSM tracks the frequency of service learning and community service in curricula (see Appendix 5.5 on assignments). A Strategic Plan (Appendix 5.6) is in place to guide the future development of service learning at CSUSM. In addition to service learning, students can participate in other civic engagement programs and in co-curricular volunteer opportunities.

The General Education program has a focus on active and collaborative learning, civic engagement, and personal goals. Consequently, CIRP's Freshman Survey (TFS) vs. College Senior Survey (CSS), along with the NSSE, are central to the assessment of GE Program Learning Outcomes (discussed in Essays 3 and 5). The Freshman and Senior Survey analyses further suggest the transformative effect of the college experience: 43% of 2013 graduating senior respondents, who also took the Freshman Survey in their first year, indicate that it is "essential or very important" to participate in a community action program, while only a quarter (23%) of these students indicated that this activity was "essential or very important" as freshmen. Increases of over 10% were also noted in the importance respondents gave to helping others in difficulty, becoming a community leader, improving understanding of other countries and cultures, helping to promote racial understanding, and influencing social values (see Appendix 4.4). These data suggest that CSUSM is producing graduates who recognize the importance of civic leadership, community action, and contributing to the welfare of their community.

CSUSM faculty are creating more opportunities to become involved in community engaged scholarship through an [Engaged Scholarship grant program](#). This program provides financial support intended to increase collaboration between academics and organizations outside the academy and addresses community issues through the mutually beneficial

exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. In addition, CSUSM further promotes civic engagement through its student organizations, which are actively involved in the local community. The [2014-15 Handbook for Student Organizations](#) includes community service as a required component of "an active programming calendar."

Undergraduate Research (CFR 2.8, 2.9)

As discussed in Essay 3, CSUSM offers a wide range of undergraduate research opportunities to students through CUGR. Analyses of enrollment in supervisory courses over the past year show that virtually all majors on campus offer students access to independent study, internships, capstone experiences, and/or research under the mentorship of a faculty member. Over the past 5 years the campus has enrolled an average of 1086 students per semester in these high-impact practices. In addition to the supervision research opportunities, additional opportunities are offered through campus research centers, including the [Office for Training, Research and Education in the Sciences \(OTRES\)](#), the [California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center \(CICSC\)](#), and the [National Latino Research Center \(NLRC\)](#). CSUSM recognizes the high-impact learning experiences these undergraduate research programs deliver and supports their important contributions to students' success on campus.

Study Abroad (CFR 2.11)

As Essay 3 discusses, the [Office of Global Education](#) is the home of a number of services and initiatives to serve international students and offer study abroad opportunities for CSUSM students wanting an international experience as part of their education.

Internships/Student Placement (CFR 2.13)

As a recent Gallup-Purdue University study revealed, the data are clear that internships both allow students to apply what they learn and improve the chances of graduates to obtain employment after college. Moreover, in a 2011 survey of employers conducted by the California State University Career Centers, 67% of the responding employers who hired

interns from CSU campuses agreed that internships are an “Extremely Important” or “Very Important” part of their overall recruiting strategy (see Appendix 3.6). Employers also indicated that when recruiting for interns, they recruited from an average of 2.5 CSU campuses, underscoring the competitive nature of securing internships and the need for quality internship preparation and campus support.

In recognition of the importance of the high-impact educational practice of internships and the necessity of dedicated institutional supports, in Spring 2105, CSUSM created an Office of Internships. A Faculty Director in the Office of Internships is focused on assisting faculty with implementing pedagogical best practices and increasing internship course opportunities. Additionally, a staff liaison in this new office works to build relationships with community partners/placement sites and coordinates the securing of university-partner agreements. Along with launching the Office of Internships and the implementation of integrated and coordinated student placement activities, the CSUSM Academic Senate is currently working on defining various types of Engaged Learning (e.g., internship, service learning, and clinical) and creating an internship policy.

Another example of a CSUSM initiative that seeks to prepare students for the workplace is the Career Readiness Initiative (CRI), which CHABSS founded in fall 2012. CRI assists liberal arts students on the pathway from the classroom to the workplace by being deliberate in its efforts to help students connect their skills and knowledge to career choices, providing them with the tools and strategies they need for career success with an emphasis on mentoring and internship programs. In Fall 2015, CHABSS will add a curricular component to CRI with the first section of ID 401, Career Readiness and Professional Communication.

Co-Curricular Engagement (CFR 2.11)

In 2011, CSUSM developed a Co-Curricular Model (CCM) to create an integrated learning environment where students are empowered to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom through a myriad of intentional learning opportunities. The CCM provides a framework to support integrated learning at CSUSM, serves as a resource to guide the development of co-curricular learning opportunities, and promotes student engagement so that upon graduation, students will be competitive in a global workforce. Grounded in the AAC&U LEAP Initiative, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, and the CSUSM GE Learning Outcomes, the CCM identifies five student learning outcomes: Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility, Leadership and Interpersonal Development, Career and Professional Development, Critical Thinking and Ethical Reasoning, and Holistic Learning.

The model is assessed utilizing existing campus benchmarks and the data collected are utilized to inform the development of programs and services. A sample report is provided in Appendix 6.6. Presented to over 20 constituent groups, the CCM has received an overwhelmingly positive response from the campus community. The Division of Student Affairs has charged a Co-Curricular Implementation Team to identify strategies to integrate the model across the institution. Future plans include partnerships with the Faculty Center and the Office of Undergraduate Studies to ensure broad implementation across the University.

Graduation Rates (CFR 1.2, 2.10)

CSUSM’s 6-year graduation rates have also increased, from 36.5% for fall 2000 entrants to 46.8% for fall 2008. Using the [Expected Graduation Rate Calculator](#) developed by the Higher Education Research Institute as a benchmarking tool, CSUSM has discovered that students are consistently graduating at higher rates than initially predicted by the CIRP [Freshmen Survey](#), which examines student characteristics and experiences. This demonstrates that the programs and initiatives

offered on campus are contributing to greater student success. CSUSM is optimistic that the creation of the Office of Undergraduate Studies and its charge to lead the Graduation Initiative for CSUSM further buttress the plans to reduce time to graduation while increasing retention and graduation rates.

In fact, in 2009, the CSU created the [Graduation Initiative](#) with the intent of not only increasing graduation rates by a minimum of six percent for all students by 2015, but to also bring the rates of Underrepresented Minority (URM) students to the same level as non-URM students. Each campus was given a [target](#) 6-year graduation rate for first-time and transfer students entering in fall 2009; CSUSM's rate was set at 45% for first-time students and 71% for transfer students, with equal rates for URM and non-URM students (see Appendix 5.7). The University has largely [closed the achievement gap and improved retention and graduation rates](#) for these students. In addition, CSUSM is producing graduates who recognize the importance of [civic leadership, community action and contributing to the welfare of their community](#).

Retention and graduation rates have also improved for graduate students on campus. The two-year retention rate for graduate student cohorts increased from 64.8% in 2010 to 67.7% in 2012. From fall 2010 to fall 2011, the three-year retention rate of graduate student cohorts increased from 64.1 to 67.7. In addition, in a five-year span, from fall 2006 to fall 2011, CSUSM decreased the time to degree from 3 years to 2.7 years. [Graduation rates](#) have remained stable, between 40% and 45% (see Appendix 5.8). New targets were set by the Chancellor's Office in fall 2015. Preliminary data provided by the CSU Dashboard suggest that CSUSM is on target to exceed its 2025 goals (see Appendix 6.7).

New Initiatives from the Office of Undergraduate Studies

To further support the undergraduate experience, in addition to the Chancellor's Office HIP Initiative noted previously, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies has supported faculty in applying for and/or securing the following grants and initiatives:

CO Initiative - Threshold Concepts and Wicked Problems Initiative: Faculty received \$500 to design and facilitate a January 2015 workshop that brought together CSUSM and community college faculty to discuss discipline-specific foundational knowledge (threshold concepts) and wicked problems (challenges that require interdisciplinary solutions). The goal is to work cross-institutionally to revise curriculum.

North County Higher Education Alliance (NCHEA) Transfer Success Grant: A faculty member partnered with the Office of Undergraduate Studies (OUGS) to secure \$1,125 to facilitate CSUSM transfer success for Mira Costa College and Palomar College students who are interested in transferring.

Title V Grant: In partnership with the faculty lead for this project, the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) Director, and multiple Student Affairs colleagues, in May 2015, CSUSM submitted a proposal (\$605K). If funded, this grant will support curricular and student academic services that benefit all students while directly enhancing the academic support for Latin@ students.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies has also secured:

Preparing College-Ready Writers Workshop Series: This cross-divisional, cross-college, community project brings together CSUSM faculty and the School of Education and high school and community college faculty. With a \$5,000 Community Engagement grant for the 14/15 AY and the San Marcos Writing Project, over the course of four Saturday workshops, faculty identified concrete ways to prepare and support incoming university writers. Momentum for this project is palpable, especially with Common Core. Ways to make this engaged collaborative fiscally sustainable are being explored.

CO Initiative - Fostering the Strategic Use of Data to Improve Students' Success AKA Predictors of CSUSM Students' Academic Success and Struggle Project: Collaborating with our colleagues in IITS, \$212,500 was split evenly between OUS and IITS to build a data-base infrastructure using Tab-

leau that will create a dashboard (for use by administrators, faculty, and staff) that will help identify students' academic success and struggles. Faculty/staff teams are working together now (summer 2015) to use the Tableau data to identify student needs and to then develop possible solutions/interventions to be offered and assessed during the 15/16 AY.

Governor's Finance Office Innovation Award:

Thanks to more than fifteen years of a successful partnership among First-Year Programs (FYP), the colleges, and multiple units in Student Affairs, FYP designed and nurtured a \$2.5 million award-winning program for CSUSM students, one that has essentially erased the one-year retention achievement gap for both URM students and first-generation college students. See the details noted above regarding FYP. The data tell the story of this program's success. The qualitative and quantitative data associated with this application reinforce the spirit of this campus. In Cesar Chavez's words, "¡Si se puede!" With this award, the campus is now in the early stages of imagining and designing an Academic Success Center that will enhance the First-Year Program while also laying the foundation for future Sophomore and Transfer Success Programs.

The creation of the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the meaningful programs and initiatives across campus designed and offered in support of students' success, the decision to move the learning centers back to AA and move the STEM Center and Supplemental Instruction to OUGS, and the recent Innovation Award position CSUSM well to scale-up the undergraduate experience. The vibrant, student-centered programming, strategic reorganization, and influx of grant and initiative funds should allow CSUSM to begin imagining, planning for, and building an academic success center housed in AA that will serve all students—those who are shining academic stars, those who are struggling, and the vast majority, who the Education Advisory Board identifies as the "murky middle." With a strategically placed

Academic Success Center on campus, a clear message will be sent to all students on campus, "¡Si se puede!"

Student Satisfaction (CFR 4.1, 2.11, 2.13)

The majority of seniors (87%) responding to the 2014 NSSE gave their experience at CSUSM a "good or excellent" rating, and 78% said that they would choose CSUSM again if they were starting their college experience over. Seniors' interactions with academic advisors had an average rating of 4.8 on a 7 point-Likert scale (with 7 being excellent), their interactions with faculty a 5.5, their interactions with Student Services staff (Career Services, Student Activities, etc.) a 4.9, and their interactions with other administrative staff (Registrar, Financial Aid, etc.) a 5.0.

These findings are echoed in the 2013 College Senior Survey, where three-quarters of respondents said that they were satisfied with their college experience and would choose to enroll at CSUSM if they had to make their college decision again. More than 80% were satisfied with the quality of instruction, major courses, contact with faculty, and class size. These same seniors were somewhat likely to be satisfied with the sense of community among students and with the availability of social activities. More than half of seniors responding to the survey came to CSUSM as transfer students (Appendix 5.9).

Findings from the 2014 Alumni Survey (Appendix 3.5) show that more than 50% of alumni have given CSUSM a positive recommendation to a prospective student. 54.2% of graduates between fall 2012 and fall 2013 who responded to the 2014 survey report being enrolled in or planning to go to graduate school, and just over 25% of respondents who graduated in fall 2008 or earlier have gone on to earn additional degrees. Finally, more than 80% of respondents are currently working, and the majority of graduates with advanced degrees report working in a job in line with their career goals.

Student access can be the gateway to student success, if access is an active principle implemented in an increasing range of practical, data-driven institutional supports that are regularly reappraised and retooled to meet the changing needs of a diverse student population. CSUSM's ability to provide access in innovative ways will further distinguish it as a new kind of public university.

6 Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review; Assessment; Use of Data and Evidence

Annual Assessment (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

Since 2006, departments offering majors for undergraduate degrees and graduate programs have been required to conduct annual assessments focusing on one or more Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs). All department PSLOs have been published in the University Catalog since 2008. The oversight of assessment has evolved on the campus. From creating a Learning Outcomes and Assessment Fellow (LOAF) in 2008, to supporting the combined efforts of the LOAF and the GE Assessment Coordinator (both appointed faculty positions), to appointing a Director of Assessment in 2012, the campus has placed an increased amount of attention on assessment and assessment practices and policies. In 2014, the campus hired a University Assessment Specialist, a full-time staff position devoted solely to all assessment efforts on campus. This significant hire is the most recent action in CSUSM'S sustained and purposeful focus on assessment.

While assessment oversight has continued to evolve over the years, assessment efforts on campus have continued to evolve as well. Over the last five years, colleges, departments, and programs have worked to refine missions and PSLOs, create curriculum maps, and develop sustainable assessment practices. It is important to note that early efforts of the LOAF, GE Assessment Coordinator, and Director of Assessment were integral to shifting

the culture around assessment activities and encouraging departments and programs to ask assessment questions that were meaningful to them. The LOAF also worked with departments on annual reports that described how student learning was measured, the results of the assessments, and how assessment findings led to improvement of student learning. By 2012, the majority of departments were submitting annual assessment reports, which meant that the process had become part of the culture at CSUSM.

In 2012-13, all departments were asked to participate in a campus-wide effort to update their PSLOs, map courses to PSLOs, and develop assessment schedules. After this year of planning, all programs developed assessment timelines, ideally to align with Program Review activities that are typically on a five-year cycle between reviews. Departments make efforts to assess all PSLOs within the five-year program review period, and then take one year to integrate findings to support their next program review.

To support this assessment update initiative in 2012-13, numerous collaborative workshops were held by Academic Programs and the Faculty Center to help departments further revise PSLOs and develop timelines. For example, in fall 2012, 40 faculty members attended a three-hour assessment workshop conducted by Dr. Michelle Saint-Germain (from CSULB) to begin work on assessment plans. Throughout 2012-13, "Help from Hands-on Workshops" were led by the Director of Assess-

ment (44 faculty attended at least one of these additional workshops). As Essay 3 elaborates, university-wide learning outcomes (ULOs) were also a focus of effective collaborative work in this year.

Assessing the Assessment System

In March 2013, CSUSM's Director of Assessment was selected to be a member of Cohort IV of the WASC Assessment Leadership Academy (ALA). As her culminating project for the WASC ALA, she engaged in a comprehensive review of CSUSM's existing assessment system, resulting in the preparation of a Campus Assessment Self-Study Report (Appendix 6.1) in January 2014. The report concluded that data were being generated by the campus but were not consistently used for evidence-based decision making, a finding that reflected considerations shared by the [WASC Interim Report Committee](#). The director's report also offered recommendations for improvement, including the establishment of a committee with university-wide representation to oversee assessment efforts, the identification of assessment leads within programs, increased investment in assessment training for faculty, and better channels of communication with key decision-makers across the campus.

The Director of Assessment left the position in January 2013, and recognizing the necessity to have an administrator oversee this role, CSUSM's Dean of Academic Programs became the WASC ALO and assumed oversight of campus assessment efforts. Following up with recommendations from the WASC Interim Report and the Director of Assessment, a University Assessment Council (UAC) was convened in May 2014 with the goal of distributing oversight of and accountability for assessment of student learning. The UAC includes the Dean of Academic Programs, Associate Deans and appointed faculty from each college, and other key contributors. The council's charge, delivered by the Provost, is to

- lead and coordinate campus assessment efforts;
- disseminate best practices;
- develop a central repository for assessment resources, information, and materials;

- review assessment plans and reports, and share results with the campus community; and

- investigate assessment software that may be appropriate for CSUSM's assessment needs.

Subcommittees on annual reports/plans, software solutions, and institutional learning outcomes were formed at the first fall 2014 meeting of the UAC.

In June 2014, CSUSM began a search for a University Assessment Specialist, a new role to reside in Academic Programs. The job description was shaped after a similar position in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services (CEHHS), which was filled in November 2013 to address assessment needs related to that college's multiple discipline-specific accreditations. The search culminated in the successful hire of an experienced assessment professional in August 2014. The University Assessment Specialist serves as an expert in assessment, an educator in assessment practice, and a resource for faculty, staff, and administrators engaged in assessment activities across the University. This hire marked a significant departure from CSUSM's previous model, in which one faculty member was released from coursework in return for both overseeing and supporting the campus' varied assessment initiatives. In the new model, the UAC provides the needed oversight and the assessment specialist provides expertise and support.

Funding for assessment also increased with the 2014-15 academic year, as Essay 7 discusses in greater detail. CSUSM continues to offer funds annually to degree programs engaged in PSLO assessment, and is now also providing three units per semester of release time to the six faculty members serving on the UAC. Furthermore, the University continues to offer stipends and cover the cost of training for faculty serving on the Core Competency Team, which is responsible for assessment of CSUSM seniors' written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy. Additional funds have been approved to be used for assessment training, including travel to and attendance at assessment conferences. Academic Programs will continue its practice of

partnering with the Faculty Center to deliver on-campus assessment [workshops](#) to assist faculty with annual assessment activities and enhance assessment literacy.

Current State and Future Directions of Annual Assessment

CSUSM has made considerable progress in developing, evaluating, and revising its assessment system in an effort to make the process of assessing student learning both manageable and meaningful. These efforts have dramatically improved department-level participation in annual assessment, increasing the latter from 66% participating in 2009-10 to 97% participating in 2014-15. In 2013-14, the campus returned to a regular cycle of PSLO assessment planning and reporting. The UAC reviewed the reports submitted by programs in May 2014, and the results are promising. Selected highlights are described in Appendix 6.2. The variety of approaches used by programs to assess student learning demonstrate ingenuity and curiosity with regard to assessment, and the additional support provided by the UAC, the University Assessment Specialist, and the assessment workshops will help faculty to refine their methods and become even more proficient assessment practitioners (see Appendix 6.3).

The University recognizes that it needs to continue to develop infrastructure for the campus community to share results and best practices across divisions and departments. Another area we have identified in need of further work is helping departments to “close the loop” on their assessment activities. The new University Assessment Specialist and the UAC will be key components in providing a structure to support departments and colleges as they share their findings and make improvements within their majors and courses. Work has already begun to refine the assessment activities, developing methods that are sustainable and inform pedagogy, curriculum, and the program. The University Assessment Specialist meets with departments one-on-one to assist with the review of the collected data and to develop targeted programmatic improvements that impact student learning.

General Education Assessment (CFRs 2.2a, 4.1)

Like other programs on the CSUSM campus, General Education (GE) has had to undergo much self-evaluation in order to develop goals, revise learning outcomes, and develop an overall collective understanding of the purpose and value of programmatic assessment efforts.

CSUSM’s GE program is rather large (400+ courses). It requires no small effort to establish policy and procedure while allowing for faculty input in the context of revisions. A process to develop a GE assessment system was first addressed in 2008 when the CSU Chancellor’s Office mandated that all GE programs in CSU align with the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) goals developed by AAC&U. On the CSUSM campus, this translated into articulating GE areas (A, B, C, etc.) and course faculty identifying course learning outcomes that supported each specific GE area. The General Education Committee (GEC), an Academic Senate standing committee, was tasked with developing a method for courses to report the alignment of the course learning outcomes (LOs) with LEAP outcomes, as well as the GE area. In addition, the GEC was tasked with certifying new GE courses and has recertified over 100 existing lower-division GE courses so far, ensuring that each [aligns](#) with the appropriate GE area (GE recertification forms are in Appendix 6.4). GEC will address upper-division GE course recertification in fall 2015.

In fall 2013, nine GE Program Student Learning Outcomes ([GEP SLOs](#)), enveloping the WASC-identified Core Competencies (and intended to provide a basis from which GE programmatic assessment could be developed), were accepted by the GEC and taken to the Academic Senate by the GEC chair. The GEP SLOs are considered a “working document” and were accepted by the Academic Senate with the understanding that they are to be continually reviewed and revised as necessary.

Meanwhile, as Essay 3 describes, the development and adoption of University Learning Outcomes (ULO) has made a significant advance in alignment of student learning across all levels – university, general education, and majors – and provided a clearer compass for assessment, as figure 6.1 illustrates.

Cal State San Marcos

Learning Strategies Aligned

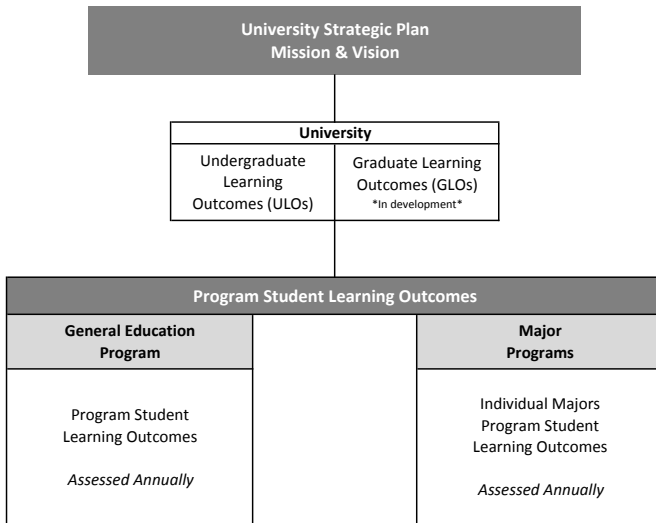


Figure 6.1

GE Going Forward

Assessment of the GE program on CSUSM's campus has been inconsistent. However, with the adopted GEPSLOs and ULOs, the campus can finally move forward with a plan to measure

student learning in GE courses systematically.

A proposed plan was developed by the University Assessment Specialist and is based on a triennial schedule that will sample both upper and lower division courses in each GE area (A, B, C, D, and E; [GEPSLO by Area Matrix](#)). The plan will cycle through all nine GEPSLOs in a 3-year period, giving each assessment activity two years to evaluate data, recommend and implement changes, and re-measure to close the loop. The complete plan was approved by the University senate and will be implemented in fall 2015 (see Appendix 6.5). It is briefly outlined in figure 6.2.

Other Assessment Activities (CFR 2.11)

Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs has adopted a cyclical process of establishing [divisional strategic priorities](#) with a three-year horizon so that their priorities [directly align](#) to support the institution's strategic priorities. Each unit within the division then develops three-year goals and annual actions [in alignment with the divisional priorities](#), as appropriate

Figure 6.2

General Education Assessment Plan Timeline

Cycle Year	Activity	Responsible Office/Committee
Year 1	Planning, aligning courses, developing tools	GEC, Academic Programs, AS
Year 2	Phase 1 - Assessment of Areas D & E courses	GEC, course faculty, AS
Year 3	Phase 2 - Assessment of area B courses Phase 1 - Collect and aggregate data from Phase 1	GEC, course faculty, program chairs/directors, AS
Year 4	Phase 3 - Assessment of Areas A & C courses Phase 2 - Collect and aggregate data from Phase 2 Phase 1 - Implement any recommended changes to Phase 1	GEC, course faculty, program chairs/directors, AS
Year 5	Phase 1 - Re-assess Areas D & E courses, after changes implemented Phase 3 - Collect and aggregate data from Phase 3 Phase 2 - Implement any recommended changes to Phase 2	GEC, course faculty, program chairs/directors, AS

for the unit. These goals generally reflect significant enhancements to existing functions or the implementation of new efforts to expand or improve unit functions. Units engage in a formative assessment process to inform the development of their annual actions to achieve their goals and a summative assessment process at the end of the academic year to evaluate the impact of the actions and inform development of subsequent actions. Results of this process are [reported annually](#) and housed on the division's [Strategic Planning and Assessment web page](#). The division will complete the third annual cycle of this process at the close of 2014-15 and is currently updating its strategic priorities for the 2015-18 cycles. To support this process and further enhance the division's planning and assessment capacity, the position of Assistant to the Vice President for Strategic Planning and Assessment was established in spring 2013 to serve as a consultative resource and process champion.

As Essay 5 discusses, a Co-Curricular Model (CCM) was developed in 2012 and implemented in 2013 to enhance the partnership between academic coursework and co-curricular programming offered through Student Affairs units. These competencies are built upon the AAC&U LEAP initiative and complement the CSUSM General Education Program Student Learning Outcomes, which are also informed by the LEAP initiative. To assess the impact of the CCM in the aggregate, relevant survey items from the 2011 and 2012 NSSE, CIRP Freshmen and Senior Surveys, and NCHA II surveys were identified and form a baseline benchmark for ongoing longitudinal analysis (see Appendix 6.6).

Core Competencies

As described in Essay 4, a faculty team was assembled in 2013 to review WASC core competencies has already completed assessments of four of the five competencies. Appendix 4.1 provides complete reports.

Retention and Graduation Rates

As Essay 5 explains, First-Year Programs (FYP) in the Office of Undergraduate Studies is a key

support for the success of first-year students. FYP works closely with the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA – discussed in a later section of this Essay) to assess the effectiveness of many of their activities, including collaborations between FYP, the course coordinators for GE Lifelong Learning (GEL) and GE Oral Communication (GEO), and the director of GE Writing (GEW). These programs have been very successful in increasing retention rates, especially among first-generation students and under-represented minorities (see Appendix 5.2). Based on the assessment data (disaggregated when possible) and student and faculty feedback, GEL has been encouraged to continue growing and to develop specialized sections and learning communities to serve specific groups of first-year students.

The collaborative work of First-Year Programs and Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services has contributed richly to an increase in first-year retention rates, especially among first-generation students and URM students. The data suggest the campus is making modest gains in retention rates beyond the first year (see Appendix 6.7). The hope is that this translates into improvement in the graduation rate as students from recent cohorts begin to reach their fourth, fifth, and sixth years. Analysis by the CSU Chancellor's Office (see Appendix 6.8) suggests that CSUSM is on target to reach the 2025 graduation rates (see Appendix 6.9).

Program Review (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

The CSUSM Degree Program Review (DPR) process was originally implemented in 1997, and revised in 1998 and 2001. In alignment with the University's aim to strengthen the role of assessment at all levels, and combined with feedback from the last WASC review cycle, the policy was revised significantly in 2011 (for summary of major changes see [Program Review comparison chart](#)). As outlined in the document's [Section III, Principles](#), the most recent policy highlights the importance of DPR in academic planning, budget and resource allocation. It also recognizes the workload required

to deliver a quality program review and dictates financial support from the Provost's office. The response to CSUSM's 2012 WASC Interim Report commended the Academic Senate approval of the latest DPR Policy, along with the creation of a [central Degree Program Review campus website](#).

Current Degree Program Review Process

The current review timeline takes approximately two years and includes communication with multiple campus groups and support from the Senate Program Assessment Committee (PAC). Depending on the program, some graduate program reviews occur alongside the corresponding undergraduate program reviews, while others occur independently. In the semester prior to commencement of the program review, an initial planning meeting occurs to support the organizers of the program review and to identify needed data. The first year focuses largely on the writing of a self-study (SS) and some administrative review, and the second year includes the external review, further administrative review, and development of a MOU ([detailed flowchart](#)).

To assist with the development of the SS, IPA provides the program a [Program Data Notebook](#) that includes detailed information about students in the major and program faculty. The in-depth review required by the SS includes the following: 1) introduction to the self-study, 2) achieving educational outcomes, 3) developing and applying resources (capacity review), 4) additional themes or special issues selected by the program, and 5) planning for the next five years. This in-depth review of a program's process toward achieving its stated educational outcomes and programmatic goals is a critical step for program-level quality assurance. A report and reflection on annual assessments of PSLOs and program-level changes that faculty have implemented based on annual assessment findings is central to the Achieving Educational Effectiveness section of the Program Review's SS. The SS also includes a future plan for growth and for addressing program weaknesses and challenges identified in the review.

In addition to the SS, the DPR includes assessments of the program's strengths and challenges as well as recommendations for its future direction from external reviewers, the Deans of the Library and Instructional and Information Technology Services, the College Dean, and the PAC. The PAC also recommends the length of the next review cycle based on the following criteria specified in the Program Review Policy and Guidelines:

- Program adherence to the terms of the previous MOU;
- The degree to which the annual assessments have generated useful data and whether assessment results have been used to make appropriate changes;
- The strengths and challenges identified by the review of educational effectiveness and capacity; and
- The degree to which the five-year plan explicitly and appropriately addresses program challenges and enhances or preserves program strengths.

The three possible recommendations for the length of the next review cycle are:

- **Recommendation to Continue a Program with Notation of Exceptional Quality:** Approval is recommended without reservation and with a notation of specific areas of program promise and excellence. These programs will be recommended for a seven-year review cycle.
- **Recommendation to Continue a Program of Quality and Promise:** Program approval is recommended with identification of specific areas that need to be further developed and a notation of specific areas of achievement. These programs will be recommended for a five-year review cycle.
- **Recommendation of Conditional Continuation:** Conditional approval is recommended with identification of specific areas requiring significant improvement and a reasonable period of time for making these improvements. These programs will be

placed on a five-year review cycle with an interim report to be delivered to the Dean of Academic Programs in three years. The contents of the interim report will address the issues raised in the previous review.

The DPR culminates in an MOU, agreed upon by all relevant parties to the review, consisting of steps for improvement to be taken by the program and administration during the next review cycle. Items agreed upon during the MOU process, especially those with resource implications, are then included in college Strategic Plans and submitted to Academic Affairs. In addition, the campus recently implemented a mid-cycle review to help programs stay on track to reach MOU goals.

The 2011 program review policy MOU process has resulted in agreement about significant changes for program improvement to be undertaken by program faculty and the University administration. The most common changes include: additional resources for tenure-track faculty and staff hires; enhanced facilities (including laboratories) needed to deliver program curricula; PSLO development and mapping PSLOs to courses on PSLO matrices; development of meaningful assessment strategies that follow the University's practice of focusing Annual Assessments on student mastery of program PSLOs; use of Annual Assessment data for program-level change; program restructuring and curriculum development; and revisiting inclusion of particular courses, as well as the overall extent of program participation in GE.

By the end of 2014-15, nearly half of all academic programs will have completed their reviews under the new policy ([calendar of reviews](#)). To this point, the new DPR process appears to be more effective in comparison to the previous review process, as measured by faculty acceptance of the new policy and appreciation for improvements. In particular, faculty recognize

that the intent and spirit of DPR is to encourage meaningful reviews consisting of candid assessments of program strengths and challenges and to support efforts to achieve program improvement. Crucial to determining the effectiveness of the DPR process is the extent to which the results of DPR will actually be used to inform decision making and to improve instruction and student learning outcomes. Because programs and the administration are still in the process of implementing the terms of the first round of MOUs, the effectiveness of the review process cannot yet be fully determined. However, with the first round of interim reports (due two years after completion of the Program Review) being submitted in 2015-16, the campus will get a sense for how the MOU action items are being addressed and thus, gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the new policy.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination (CFRs 2.10, 4.2-4.7)

Case Study: Program Review

The B.S. degree in Biology was in the first cohort to undergo the revised DPR process. One of the key findings of the external reviewers, and a noted action item in the MOU, was that the Biological Sciences Department was lacking faculty in a specific instructional and research area. As of Spring 2015, an active search is underway to hire a new tenure-track faculty to fill this noted void.

CSUSM has a strong commitment to making data-driven decisions. This institutional aim requires a coherent and consolidated system to satisfy the needs of campus data aggregation, reporting, analysis, and delivery. The data used for assessment, degree program review, and other investigations are generated by several entities and programs on campus.

Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis

The Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA) is the main office of institutional research for CSUSM. This office is staffed by four analysts and operates under the President's division. Some of the major duties of IPA are to 1) provide the campus with official data based on student enrollment at census, 2) provide support to procure and evaluate various grants, 3) calculate retention and graduation rates, 4) provide data support for campus initiatives such as the Graduation Initiative, HSI, First-Year Programs, OTRES and WASC, 5)

oversee and administer local and national surveys, 6) manage the student course evaluations process, 7) provide data for departments undergoing degree program review, and 8) provide data for the Integrated Post-secondary Educational Data System and for the CSU. As Essays 3 and 4 discuss, IPA maintains a comprehensive survey portfolio that, when combined with other institutional data, provides robust insight and analysis of high impact educational practices related to civic and community engagement, including national surveys such as the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), the Higher Education Research Institution's Freshman Survey (TFS) and the follow-up College Senior Survey (CSS). In addition, IPA administers a graduation survey as well as an alumni survey. These survey instruments, frequently referenced in the literature, are proven best practices in assessing and improving the college experience and student learning outcomes. The Freshman Survey is conducted annually and the NSSE and CSS are conducted biennially, in opposite years. Results are shared broadly and used by all levels of administration and faculty to assess and refine practice. Starting in spring 2015, the campus will add the Diverse Learning Environments Survey to its portfolio.

Results from these surveys are routinely shared with division vice presidents, deans, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, First-Year Programs, and other relevant offices on campus. Summaries of survey findings are posted on the IPA website. IPA also prepares specialized reports with disaggregated survey findings to meet the needs of specialized constituents such as HSI, the Gradation Initiative Steering Committee, Office of Undergraduate Studies, and program review. Finally, IPA maintains a robust [website](#) to

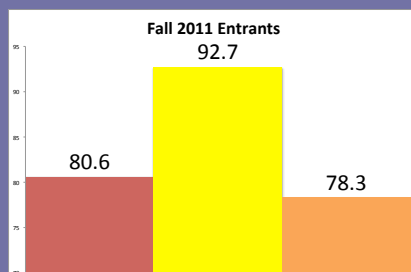
provide easy access to data such as information about new and currently enrolled students, retention and graduation rates, degree reports, Common Data Sets, and information about the course evaluation process.

Instructional and Information Technology Services

Instructional and Information Technology Services (IITS) is responsible for the management and support of technology across the campus. The University's commitment to becoming a learning organization and a data-informed decision-making university was further institutionalized in the 2012 [Information Technology Strategic Plan](#). The governance structure of the IT Strategic Plan includes an information management steering committee, consisting of the campus Vice-Presidents. Further, an interdisciplinary data team with representatives from IPA, IITS, the registrar, enrollment management services and other key data stewards meet regularly to review campus data needs. This collaboration facilitates the development of mechanisms for reporting, assessing, and informing the campus about key engagement practices, institutional planning, and student progress and success. The information management strategy is an exemplar of CSUSM's commitment to measurement and assessment, and to alignment of these activities across key goals and institutional priorities.

Case Study: Data Driven Decisions

The Undeclared Learning Community (ULC) was launched by First-Year Programs in Fall 2011 to support undeclared / undecided freshmen. These students were block enrolled into GE – Life Long Learning and Information Literacy (GEL 101) and GE – Oral Communication (GEO 102). IPA-generated data illustrated the increased 1-YR retention of ULC participant (yellow bar) over all first-time freshmen (red bar) and all undeclared (orange bar). This finding, along with student and faculty feedback, led to the expansion of the ULC program in successive years.



One of the four themes of the Information Technology Strategic Plan is Theme B - Informing Decisions with Data. The aim of this theme is to use campus technology to collect, analyze and distribute data to inform decisions across the campus about metrics for forecasting course/facility/enrollment demand,

student success, the efficacy of learning delivery models, and financial reports key to fund-raising activities. By providing dashboards for various data libraries, faculty, staff, students, and administrators can have rapid and easy access to data.

One example of a data dashboard used on campus is the Reporting and Data Analytics Repository (RaDAR) program. Whereas IPA is responsible for census and survey data, the campus also utilizes “live” data in its decision making. In 2009, it was recognized that there was a strong need for easy access to live data and self-service reports by a multitude of users. RaDAR was developed as a solution to this problem and IITS moved forward to provide a data warehousing environment where the primary goals of developing RaDAR were to 1) provide a central repository of relevant data and reports; 2) provide a mechanism of data retrieval accessible by the public and campus community; 3) allow for the timely retrieval of data while incorporating security, scalability and usability; and 4) allow for groups to retrieve data tailored to their programmatic level.

Since 2009, the RaDAR project has created over 30 reports (Appendix 6.10). The reports are used by faculty, staff and administrators based on users’ security access. All reports are easily accessible through the RaDAR [website](#). The current RaDAR data sources include PeopleSoft Student data (refreshed nightly with updated data) and static data including Enrollment Reporting System (ERS) files (based on census), applicant files (ERSA), and degree files.

The use of RaDAR reports demonstrates the campus’ willingness to use data for campus decisions. CSUSM is able to monitor the number of reports run, which reports are run most frequently, and who is using the portal. The top 10 reports are those that provide the campus with data on program evaluation, student admissions and student enrollment. Compiling usage data has allowed CSUSM to assess the utilization of RaDAR and has revealed that, although some individual users frequently use RaDAR, many who could benefit greatly from RaDAR data never use it. For example, several RaDAR reports are helpful for predicting course demand and enrollment growth;

associate deans of the four colleges were among the top users, yet few department chairs used RaDAR (Appendix 6.11). While the abilities of RaDAR have been presented to department chairs, it may take more one-on-one training to determine user roadblocks and get them comfortable using this helpful resource.

RaDAR has also increased efficiency and timeliness of key data. For example, the RaDAR Team worked closely with IPA to develop the Program Review Data Notebook with the information needed for DPR as well as reports that provide the latest degrees awarded. The RaDAR website also provides an online Data Request form that gets routed to the appropriate data stewards on campus. Since its inception in spring 2012, the campus has processed over 200 data requests. Some requests are queries for individual use and other requests are RaDAR reports requiring greater complexity, depending on the audience for the data.

Community Engagement Data

The CSUSM Division of Community Engagement maintains primary responsibility for tracking and documenting institutional engagement, which includes tracking and reporting on faculty engagement scholarship development grants and outcomes, institutional partnerships (as evidenced in the [partnership grid template](#) submitted to the Carnegie Foundation), community service learning using the [Serving Students and Service Sites](#) (S4) database, and the use of other less formal systems to track engagement with community partner organizations and individuals. The data and information are used to assess the impact and effectiveness of new and continuing partnerships, develop communications, and construct the annual budget request for the University budget process for the Division of Community Engagement and/or campus-wide engagement initiatives.

The campus still needs to develop a mechanism for tracking faculty engagement, service, or scholarship activities that fall outside of the engagement scholarship grants process. This must be integrated with the current faculty activity reporting system and the retention, tenure, and promotion process to ensure convenience of use and encourage accurate and com-

plete reporting. Discussions are in the formative stage.

Data Looking Forward

CUSUM has a multitude of data programs, surveys, collection practices, and dashboards. IITS is expanding the existing RaDAR system to provide more sophisticated data presentation layers to assist in the data analytics of Academic Predictors and High Impact Practices. The goal is the delivery of dashboards and tools that answer questions required to improve graduation rates and identify at-risk students. IITS is also in the midst of implementing Degree Planner, an interactive online eAdvising tool that functions in PeopleSoft to help students be more proactive with their course planning (discussed in Essay 5). The intent is to aid students in completing their degree more quickly and more effectively while also providing the campus with course need information for enrollment planning.

The University is continually evolving its commitment to data-driven decision making, not only by expanding and refining how, where, and for what purposes it assesses its practices, but also through its purposeful, increasingly successful efforts to engage faculty in assessment by demonstrating its value and providing the necessary support for the work involved.

7 Sustainability:

Financial Viability; Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment

Financial Stability: the Next 7-10 Years (CFR 3.4)

CSUSM is a financially stable institution with a demonstrated commitment to ensuring a viable future for the campus and the region. As an increasingly high-demand campus, CSUSM has continuously exceeded enrollment targets and is recognized as a place where students want to learn. Enrollment (head-count) has increased by 24% from 9,767 in fall 2009 to 12,154 in fall 2014. CSUSM is so highly sought after by students that it is anticipated that the University will continue to receive yearly enrollment target increases from the CSU system. However, with flat state-support budgets for several years, meeting this demand poses challenges. The 2013-14 base budget included an additional \$2.85 million collected in [Academic Excellence Student Success Fees](#) (AESS), and an additional \$1.15 million from self-support programs offered through Extended Learning. The AESS fee is a mandatory fee required of all students to enroll or attend the University. The fee supports three priorities: adding sections for high demand courses, expanding library hours and resources, and enhancing student academic support. Together, these non-state-funding sources totaled \$4 million dollars, or approximately 2.4% of the University's \$125 million base budget⁸.

Various factors contribute to the University's financial picture. Prudent planning processes have made it possible for CSUSM to manage the various budget reductions over the past few years as well as plan for the future. For more than 20 years, the [University Budget Committee](#) (UBC), which serves as an advisory body to the President and Executive Council, has existed to create a consultative process for developing recommendations regarding the allocation of incremental increases or decreases to the annual operating budget. The UBC follows a strategic budgeting approach to align resources with the mission, vision, and goals of the University. Through this planning process, the University promotes fiscal prudence, responsibility, and transparency, taking a multi-year approach to ensure good financial stewardship over a span of several years. To assist with planning, the University Budget Office developed the Multi-Year Budget Model to project operational resources and commitments over a three-year period. Using this tool, the University is able to plan for potential deficits to ensure the University is able to cover financial commitments and remain financially stable if state support or fee revenues are not received.

The University continues to maintain a strong financial outlook for the future and financial audits have not shown any material weaknesses. In 2011-12, the financial reporting requirements for the CSU system changed, eliminating the requirement for campus stand-alone financial statements. Instead, the statement of net assets, statement of

⁸ Unless otherwise stated, all figures in this Essay refer to base funding rather than one-time funds.

revenues, expenses, changes in net assets, and statement of cash flows of each campus are included as an addendum to the annual system-wide audit. In 2013, the CSU's Bond Rating was upgraded to Aa2 by Standard and Poor's (S&P) Rating Services, which reflects the on-going improvements in operating performance and good fiscal policies in place at the CSU and a positive outlook for the University.

Additionally, legal mandates require cash trust projects to record financial transactions on a cash basis and demonstrate a positive cash flow balance throughout the fiscal year. Fiscal Services and the University Budget Office monitor these to ensure compliance with the regulations. Through its core processes, leadership, and prudent planning, CSUSM will continue to be financially sustainable over the next decade and beyond.

The University Budget Committee and CSUSM's Financial Condition (CFR 3.4)

The University Budget Committee (UBC) includes senior university leadership, faculty, students, and staff representing all divisions of CSUSM. After several years of state and system-wide budget crises, by FY 2013-14, the members of UBC engaged in a more-forward thinking, less reactive process to review divisional reinvestment categories within the framework of the University's strategic priorities and budgeting principles given the improved state budget. UBC annually prepares a document reflecting the ranking of funding priorities and listing the discretionary dollars that might be available for the upcoming fiscal year. Accreditation, assessment, compliance, and regulatory items were a consensus amongst the voting members as initiatives of high priority that should be funded accordingly. Looking ahead, the committee recommended rebuilding the University reserve to a prudent level for unforeseen emergencies and exigencies. UBC has also provided incremental funding recommendations for activities that fall under government regulation, CSU contractual obligations, or CSUSM campus directives. The adopted 2015-16 state budget fully funded the CSU Board of Trustees request. Given the regional

demography, demand and capacity, CSU San Marcos has continued to successfully make the case for strategic reinvestment and enrollment growth.

The University has maintained a strong fiscal condition throughout the economic downturn and into the recovery. The University has served more students by creating alternative revenues, raising productivity, offering programs through self-support, using technology, changing business practices and building philanthropic support. The Temecula off-campus center was serving 330 additional students by 2013 in high demand disciplines, completely through self-support, and several others in non-credit and lifelong learning programs. Tuition fee revenues in extended learning increased by an average of 39%, year over year, between 2012-13 and 2013-14. This has helped in serving the region and generates a new revenue stream through profit sharing with the University. Finally, the implementation of the Academic Excellence and Student Success Fee in the 2013-14 year has enabled the institution to provide more course sections (evidenced by an increased average unit load), expand library services and hours, expand proven high impact practices, and maintain and expand student academic support services.

Aligning Financial Allocations with Strategic Goals (CFR 3.4)

In fulfilling its mission, CSUSM is guided by five strategic core values that support its strategic plan. They include academic excellence, student life and leadership, diversity and educational equity, community partnerships, and campus climate. Academic excellence encompasses the intellectual pursuits of the University and includes instruction, instructional research, and instructional support. Student success involves support and services for both curricular and co-curricular pursuits. Diversity and educational equity ensure a rich institutional experience in an inclusive, safe atmosphere in which students, faculty and staff from as broad a range of experiences and backgrounds as possible have access to opportunities to benefit from and contribute to the life of the University. As a Carnegie-designated community-engaged university, CSUSM reaches out intentionally and strategically to all the communities it

serves, whether underrepresented students, tribal neighbors, military establishments, health organizations, or the business community, creating partnerships that help address the region’s most critical issues. A positive campus environment provides a safe and welcoming setting in which the pursuits of the other four values can flourish. Table 7.1 provides examples of programs, initiatives, and activities, underway or completed, related to each of the five values. The University’s core values drive the University’s budget decisions. Along with funding its general operations, which include the physical plant, investments in technology, and meeting its salary and benefits obligations, these five strategic areas represent major portions of the University’s annual base budget allocations. New base budget allocations, from FY 2007-08 through FY 2014-15, are shown in table 7.2 according to these categories. They are exhibited graphically in figure 7.1.

Combining student life and student academic support into one single category representing the core value of Student Life, the pie chart in figure 7.2 shows that nearly half the allocated base funds of the University budget supports the initiatives represented by its core values. The other fifty percent funds university operations, salary and benefits, including the salaries and benefits of the faculty who deliver academic programs to students. The key below the figure explains some of the significant elements included in each slice of the budget allocation pie.

Long Range Academic Master Planning (CFR 4.7)

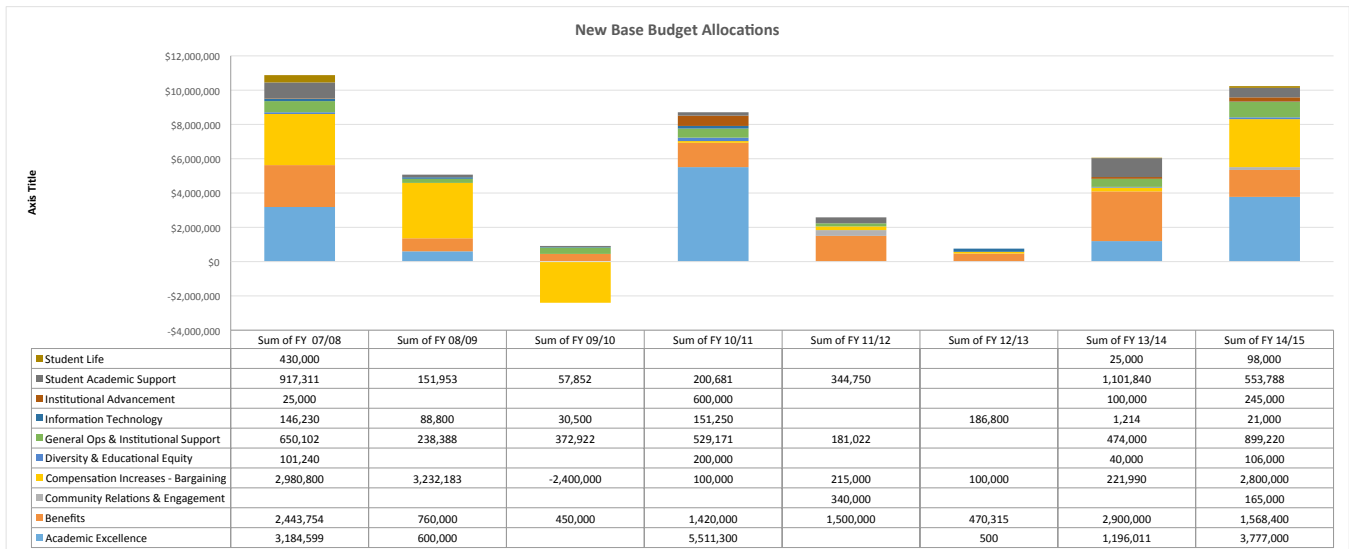
The Long Range Academic Master Plan (LAMP) task force was established by the Provost, in consultation with the Academic Senate, for the purpose of drafting a guide to CSUSM’s curricular and

Table 7.1

Programs, Initiatives, and Activities

Core Strategic Value	Programs, Initiatives, and Activities
Academic Excellence	Maintaining a robust faculty via recruitment and faculty development. Providing equipment to ensure lab safety Acquiring electronic library materials Supporting Graduate Studies Academic Excellence Student Success (AESS) Fee
Student Success & Student Life	Facilitating Graduation Initiatives Creating Learning Communities Offering Supplemental Instruction Supporting First Year Programs Providing Service Learning Opportunities Undergraduate Research Naming a Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Diversity & Educational Equity	Hiring a Chief Diversity Office Engaging in Diversity Mapping Establishing a Tribal Liaison Achieving Hispanic Serving Institution Status.
Community Partnerships	Creating a Division of Community Engagement Pursuing Engagement Scholarship Maintaining a Legislative Liaison Bolstering Advancement Infrastructure for Philanthropic Support
Campus Climate	Establishing the Leadership Academy Continuing Campus Connect Program Strengthening Campus Safety and Risk Management Functions

Figure 7.1



program development for the future, tying together the campus strategic plans and regional economic and employment data, to determine and prioritize proposals for new degree programs, options, minors, and certificates, from across all of CSUSM’s colleges.

In 2014-15, the LAMP Task Force created a report⁹ that identified, in rank order, areas with high anticipated demand for skilled employees based on an analysis of workforce reports and economic trends in the region, along with examples of majors that would qualify students for jobs in these areas. In addition to consideration of regional demand, the group identified core (aka foundational) undergraduate programs that each CSU campus is encouraged by the CSU Trustees to develop that do not yet exist at CSUSM.

9 Please see the [LAMP webpage](#) for the entire report.

Identifying and Enhancing Student Competencies for the Future (CFR 2.2)

Student success, as a major strategic initiative of the University, involves support and services for both curricular and co-curricular pursuits. As shown in figure 7.2 above, the University has committed 9% of its total base budget to Student Success. The Office of First-Year Programs (FYP), in the Office of Undergraduate Studies (OUGS), prepares incoming students for success in college and beyond. Additional funding to support the pre-freshman CSU Early Start Program (\$88,000) has been allocated as well. The University supports FYP with an ongoing budget of \$20,000 for facilitating graduation and student success. As has been stated in previous Essays, the University established the office and appointed its first dean for Undergraduate Studies. The annual budget request for this office is nearly \$250,000.

Table 7.2

New Base Budget Allocations 2007-08 through 2014-15

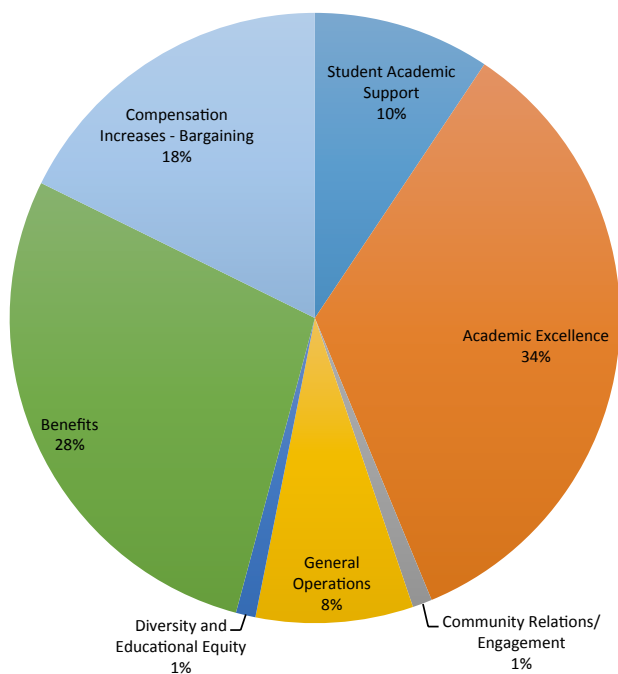
Row Labels	Values									Sum of Grand Total
	Sum of FY 07/08	Sum of FY 08/09	Sum of FY 09/10	Sum of FY 10/11	Sum of FY 11/12	Sum of FY 12/13	Sum of FY 13/14	Sum of FY 14/15		
Academic Excellence	3,184,599	600,000		5,511,300		500	1,196,011	3,777,000	14,269,410	
Benefits	2,443,754	760,000	450,000	1,420,000	1,500,000	470,315	2,900,000	1,568,400	11,512,469	
Community Relations & Engagement					340,000			165,000	505,000	
Compensation Increases - Bargaining	2,980,800	3,232,183	-2,400,000	100,000	215,000	100,000	221,990	2,800,000	7,249,973	
Diversity & Educational Equity	101,240			200,000			40,000	106,000	447,240	
General Ops & Institutional Support	650,102	238,388	372,922	529,171	181,022		474,000	899,220	3,344,825	
Information Technology	146,230	88,800	30,500	151,250		186,800	1,214	21,000	625,794	
Institutional Advancement	25,000			600,000			100,000	245,000	970,000	
Student Academic Support	917,311	151,953	57,852	200,681	344,750		1,101,840	553,788	3,328,175	
Student Life	430,000						25,000	98,000	553,000	
Grand Total	10,879,036	5,071,324	-1,488,726	8,712,402	2,580,772	757,615	6,060,055	10,233,408	42,805,886	

OUGS was recently awarded \$2.5 million from the California Department of Finance. This Innovation Award recognizes the campus' past successes in supporting students, particularly those from under-represented minority backgrounds. The University has commissioned the OUGS to lead campus efforts with regard to the CSU system-wide graduation initiative, and is committed to resourcing these activities appropriately.

CSUSM graduates will live and work in an increasingly globalized society. As Essay 3 discusses, the University has invested in preparing them for the challenges they may face by providing learning opportunities that increase student exposure to global

Figure 7.2

Budget Allocation and Strategic Goals



issues, including increased efforts to provide study abroad opportunities for local students to apply what they have learned in a global context. The University has also invested in the recruitment of international students to provide a setting that invites students to interact with peers from around the world.

Program Review and Commitment to Assessment (CFR 3.3, 4.1, 4.3)

The University remains committed to academic excellence for student success in the twenty-first century through a process of continuous improvement through program assessment. This is achieved through investment in assessment at the program, department, college, and university levels, as well as through external assessment via WASC and other accreditation bodies.

Assessment

In recent years, CSUSM has committed \$100,000 annually to hiring two professional assessment specialists. As Essay 6 details, the University Assessment Specialist is housed in the Academic Programs Office and focuses on guiding assessment efforts across the University. The College of Education, Health and Human Services has hired its own assessment specialist focused on professional programs in areas including education and nursing. An additional \$63,000 has been allocated to the formation of the University Assessment Council (UAC) that includes administrators and faculty representatives.

Program Review

The University invests in faculty assigned time and stipends to ensure that faculty, who are responsible for curriculum development, have the

Key	
Student Academic Support	Graduation Initiative, Enrollment Management, Financial Aid , Advising
Academic Excellence	Instruction, Faculty Salaries, Professional Development
Community Relations/Engagement	Office of Community Engagement, Tribal Liaison
University Advancement	Fundraising
General Operations	Physical Plant and Equipment, Maintenance, Technology Refresh
Diversity and Educational Equity	Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander Serving Institution
Benefits	Employee benefits
Compensation Increases - Bargaining	

opportunity to fully participate in Program Review. As an institution built on the foundation of shared governance, the University funds \$20,000 to support two chairs of the Academic Senate’s Program Assessment Committee (PAC) (in years when the committee has an exceptionally large number of programs to review), as well as \$10,000 to support the chair of its General Education Committee (GEC). The support is provided in the form of faculty assigned time. In any given year, there are between four and ten departments or programs undergoing periodic review. The University provides assigned time of \$5,000 to faculty from each department undergoing self-study, for a total of \$35,000 annually. It budgets an additional \$750 for 26 departments to support annual assessment of PSLOs, for an additional total of \$20,000.

Assessment and Accreditation

CSUSM has committed considerable resources to accreditation efforts to validate internal assessment efforts externally. Currently \$77,000 is invested annually in WASC accreditation efforts. Beyond, \$97,000 has been allocated in FY 2014-15 to support the College of Business Administration in its pursuit of AACSB Accreditation, and \$76,000 to the College of Education, Health and Human Services for professional program accreditations. Additional funds have been provided to support the work of the Core Competencies Team (CCT) as well as for the Discovery Cafés for WASC assessment.

Maintaining Focus on Educational Effectiveness (CFR 3.7)

The multi-year budgeting process under which the University currently operates is a direct outgrowth of what was learned from the WASC re-accreditation of 2007. The guiding philosophy of the budget process is described as follows:

CSUSM will engage in a consultative process for developing recommendations to the President regarding allocation of incremental increases (or decreases) to the annual operating budget.

The budgeting process

- Aligns budget and resources with the University’s strategic plan, mission, vision and goals;
- Provides a multi-year, all-funds plan that is reviewed and updated regularly;
- Reflects differences and varying needs across divisions and subdivisions;
- Promotes fiscal prudence and responsibility;
- Engages and involves the entire university community;
- Fosters communication;
- Promotes collaboration among divisions and subdivisions;
- Allows for uniform presentation of data and plans;
- Assures transparency in decision making;
- Follows an annual calendar and timeline;
- Is fair, equitable and strives for no unstated assumptions; and
- Provides a way to evaluate and prioritize budget proposals from across the University for which there are limited resources.

Following these principles, guidelines and policies, CSUSM has been able to focus on its strategic priorities even as it navigated some of the most difficult state budget crises since its establishment in 1989, as well as in the history of the state of California.

The following sections illustrate how, since the last WASC visit in 2007, the University has closely aligned its funding priorities with its

strategic goals and institutional priorities, particularly as they relate to the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees offered, student learning and success, and processes for quality assurance.

CSUSM: A Learning Organization (CFRs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

In her [2013 Convocation Speech](#), President Karen Haynes characterized CSUSM as a learning organization

“...with the spirit, tenacity and wisdom to know that what we do matters even when the opinion makers may seem steeped in rhetoric to the contrary. We know that our work is important even when some may say that it costs too much and takes too long. The cost of not persisting would be devastating to this state and to our entire region.”

In her comments, the president characterized learning organizations as those that are committed to investing in people and the work they do, innovation and adaptation, continuous improvement, and a shared vision for the future.

These characteristics map closely with the University’s five strategic priorities described as follows: California State University San Marcos is an academic community dedicated to the values of academic excellence, student life, a supportive campus climate, community partnerships, and educational equity as defined in the University Strategic Development Process. These core values serve as the objectives of the University Strategic Plan, and objectives are developed in support of these core values.

The University Strategic Plan is a lens that guides strategies, actions and decisions. All campus strategic plans support the University Strategic Plan. These plans are dynamic documents that are reviewed and modified as new opportunities and challenges arise or as shifts occur in the priorities of the CSU system; they are reviewed, at least, biennially. In addition, other types of strategic plans (such as the academic master plan, academic technology plan, and

physical master plan) guide the University. Each year the President’s Executive Council, with input from the Council of University Strategic Planning (CUSP) and other advisory groups to the President, reviews the University’s performance against its established objectives to evaluate progress, identify gaps, and determine the priorities on which to focus in the next fiscal year.

Global Challenges, the Future, and CSUSM’s Response

In the twelfth Transatlantic Dialogue convened by the American Council on Education (ACE), approximately 30 college and university leaders from the United States, Canada, and Europe concluded, “pressure for performance and demonstrated outcomes gives notice to universities that they cannot expect a return to the status quo” (Kinser & Hill, 2011, page 2). To achieve better results, public higher education institutions must focus their limited resources on improving effectiveness and outcomes.

Undaunted by the recession, undeterred by public criticism of higher education, and unwavering in its commitment despite the reduction to state appropriations, CSUSM has stayed focused on its priorities and the important mission of the CSU. The CSUSM strategic plan, established by President Haynes a year after her arrival in 2004, built a vision for the future, addressed significant growth and improvement opportunities, and began to align budget and resources with campus priorities. The result has been a dynamic process that continuously aligns short-term and long-range planning goals with enrollment planning, physical master planning, and budget and resource allocation. This plan also aligns with and directly links to system priorities and initiatives, and utilizes data extensively to track progress, stimulate dialogue, and identify areas needing additional focus.

The data and information are used to assess the impact and effectiveness of actions and initiatives, develop communications, and construct the annual budget request to the University Budget Committee. The data also demonstrate the University’s contributions to the public good and the public policy goals for higher education. The University

has been a leader in improving public accountability for learning results. It was one of 17 institutions in the country to pilot the Voluntary System of Accountability <http://www.voluntarysystem.org>.

In 2012, the campus Executive Council recalibrated its measurable goals toward 2015. Keeping the focus on the priorities - not changing them, but rather identifying new and innovative strategies for achieving them - has served the campus well through the economic downturn. Through the lens of the strategic priorities, the campus can identify the best and most strategic use of resources, create strategic partnerships with industry or other government agencies, and continue to identify and develop alternative revenue streams.

The strategic enrollment growth model includes student mix, diversity, self-support programs, international students, dual admissions partnerships with community colleges, as well as online learning opportunities such as the CSU system-wide Course-match program. The strategic growth model identified five themes, which included more students, more academic programs, more physical facilities, broadening the University's reach, and strategic and best use of resources. Each theme includes a number of high priority initiatives with defined linkages to the strategic plan and identifies any resources needed in each fiscal year for the next three years.



8 Conclusion

Reflection and Plans for Improvement

The process of writing this self-study has led to thoughtful introspection. The campus community has been able to reflect upon what is done well, what needs improvement, and most importantly, how this information will be used to lead growth. As CSUSM celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2015, it is particularly useful to engage in this type of self-study because planning for the next 25 years – and beyond – is an essential question for the campus to address.

Lessons Learned

While the issue of identity and what makes the campus different is something that has been considered in many forums, this institutional report has helped further hone in on what makes CSUSM special.

High Impact Practices

While the use of HIPs is not unique to this campus, the holistic and integrative approach used at CSUSM is noteworthy. Each division and unit contributes towards student success efforts. Whether it is the co-curricular support in Student Affairs or the strategic connections with the community in the division of Community Engagement, the use of HIPs goes far beyond Academic Affairs. This is evidenced by the creation of the Office of Undergraduate Studies in Academic Affairs that is charged with being a catalyst for partnerships across divisions for HIPs. This shared responsibility and integration of HIPs are strengths upon which to build.

Diversity

The issue of diversity is crucial to any campus. At CSUSM, the perspective on diversity is broad, with the conversation occurring at many levels. This goes beyond consideration of curriculum, also taking into account hiring, interactions among the campus community, and campus climate. The Diversity Mapping project, completed in 2014-15, will lead to even more consideration of what diversity means at CSUSM.

Writing

Decades before the concept of HIPs was articulated, with writing-intensive courses recognized as leading to higher-order learning, CSUSM recognized effective writing skills as central to academic and professional success as well as being the core of civic participation and engagement. Diverse forms of evidence corroborate students' claims that intensive writing was a valuable part of their CSUSM education. Writing at CSUSM is not simply an established and static value, but an active concern that is the focus of new and novel assessments and practices, from helping to prepare college-ready writers to supporting faculty as they write for publication. Like other HIPs, a focus on writing is at CSUSM a shared responsibility and source of community.

Future Plans

Assessment

As with most campuses, institutionalizing assessment and making it part of the campus culture is a challenge. The changes over the past few years at CSUSM have led to improvements in this area and clear progress on working collaboratively with faculty so as to make assessment key in program enhancement. The campus will continue along this path, working through the University Assessment Council, and encouraging support for assessment activities (in the form of hiring assessment specialists along with other resources), to further inculcate a culture of evidence.

Role of Graduate Programs

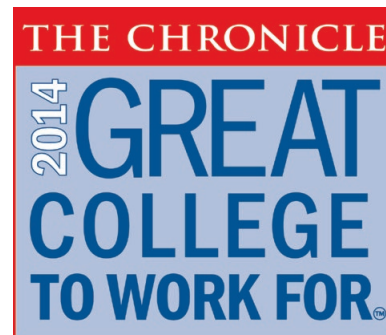
As noted in Essay 3, development of Graduate Learning Outcomes is in process. These discussions are part of the larger question of the role and purpose of graduate education on the campus. Given the development of new Master's degrees (three of four new CSUSM programs submitted to the Chancellor's Office for approval in 2015 are graduate degrees), this is an essential area to consider.

For many years, CSUSM has been considered the best kept secret in North County San Diego. However, in recent years, the campus has begun to receive recognition for its good work. For example, in 2014, the Chronicle of Higher Education recognized the University as a "[Great College to Work For](#)"[™]. Further, in her 2015 Report to the Community, President Haynes stated that the secret is out and that CSUSM is "THE place" where

- dedicated and talented faculty and staff facilitate the success of students—the region's future leaders and change-makers'
- area businesses and organizations partner to foster economic development and create real-world learning opportunities for the sake of stronger communities,
- highly talented individuals come together in the pursuit of answering society's most critical issues—identifying problems and working toward real solutions' and

- there is a proven track record of accomplishments.

This all points to the central role of the campus in the growth of this region. As such, CSUSM is mindful of the responsibility to turn promise into firm plans, potential into accomplishment, and continue along the path towards fulfilling the vision to become "a distinctive public university known for academic excellence, service to the community, and innovation in higher education." CSUSM anticipates and embraces its continued evolution into a new kind of public university.



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