Cal State San Marcos

Into the Future

California State University San Marcos's Commitment to Excellence

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WASC Report - California State University San Marcos

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Table of Contents

1 Introduction

The Educational Effectiveness Review process has provided California State University San Marcos with the opportunity to reflect on, renew and revitalize our efforts in the areas of academic master planning, strengthening academic programs through assessment of student learning, and improving retention of first year students. This cycle of reflection, renewal and revitalization has stimulated our forward movement and spurred our continuous improvement as a learning organization.

The content of the three essays tells our story since the 2005 Institutional Proposal and the 2007 Capacity and Preparatory Review Report. It is one of progress, challenges and next steps to advance our University vision and mission and honor our values. Looking backward to 2005, the evolution of thought around the three themes identified in the Institutional Proposal indicates that the University community recognized the importance of grappling with them in order to increase student learning and deliver on our promise of academic excellence.

As we face the challenge of sustaining a vibrant academic environment while dealing with significant economic factors, the knowledge and insight we have gained through the Educational Effectiveness Review process will inform our thinking, support strategic decision making and encourage the ongoing examination of our practices and policies in order to assure alignment between our aspirations and our actions.

Our Approach to Educational Effectiveness

Our approach to educational effectiveness is rooted in the core functions of teaching and learning and support for student learning and success. Four points anchor our Educational Effectiveness approach. They are:

- Clearly articulated student learning outcomes, for undergraduate and graduate programs, declare our agreed upon expectations for student learning. They are widely disseminated, including through the University Catalogue, College and department websites and in syllabi.
- Faculty led program review processes are formalized and include external reviewers. Student learning outcomes and their assessment are incorporated in these review processes.
- Disaggregated student data illustrates the achievement levels of students and allows for evidence-based reflection on how to improve instruction and student support services.
- Collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs on persistent student issues enables us to identify viable solutions and align services and resources to identified students' needs.

The accumulated effects of these elements has, as illustrated in the following essays, resulted in increasing our organizational capacity to learn through reflection by using evidence. This has resulted in positive impacts on our students' success.

Engaging in the Educational Effectiveness Review Process

In Fall 2007, following the Spring 2007 CPR visit, teams were convened to explore and write about the identified themes. In the process of reflecting upon the proposed outcomes for each theme, these teams refined their tasks to more tightly focus on the issues that would provide the most meaningful data and insights and that would provide the greatest improvement to our practices. This resulted in some revisions to the outcomes in the original Institutional Proposal. Each team consulted with appropriate stakeholder groups and data sources as they reflected on the theme specific outcomes. After deliberating on their findings, the teams produced draft essays.

In Fall 2008, each essay was posted on the Academic Affairs Strategic Planning and Accreditation website. The University community was invited to review and submit comments on each essay. Feedback could be given either electronically and/or by attending one of three Town Hall meetings. Each essay was the subject of a Town Hall gathering. The review and respond time frame covered a two month period. In addition to the essay specific meetings, two other Town Halls also explored two initiatives related to the Educational Effectiveness Review—outcomes of the Foundations of Excellence process and use of assessment in teaching.

Nine Academic Senate committees were individually briefed by the Academic Liaison Officer (ALO) on the Educational Effectiveness Review process. Academic Senate committees with specific roles and responsibilities regarding the Academic Master Planning theme (Budget and Long Range Planning and University Curriculum Committee) and the Strengthening Academic Programs Through Assessment of Student Learning theme (Program Assessment Committee) provided significant responses and input into the essays. The Student Academic Support Services team also received briefings on the process from the ALO and significantly contributed to the Improving Retention of First Year Students essay.

Organization of the Educational Effectiveness Report

The three reflective essays provide the centerpiece for this report. In them we have chronicled what we have discovered through the lens of the outcomes and questions posed at the beginning of this inquiry. In each we have identified challenges and next steps as we move into the future. The last chapter provides a reflection over the entire accreditation sequence – from proposal to educational effectiveness self study. It chronicles our progress from rudimentary thoughts at the beginning of this four year critical inquiry to the in-depth "aha's" that we have experienced as we discovered new ways of thinking about our work.

Those "aha's" now become the beginning point for our next stage of development as an even more skilled learning organization, where students are at the center of rigorously discussed, strategic and evidence-based decisions.

2 Reflective Essay One: Academic Master Planning

Introduction

In our 2005 Institutional Proposal to WASC, we identified academic master planning as our first theme and stated that our approach would be to highlight modifications to the campus's academic master planning process since our previous WASC review. At the time, we believed that the focus would be on explaining and evaluating a process then in place called the Academic Blueprint and that we would use a set of thirteen questions posed in the Institutional Proposal to guide our evaluation. The assumption was that the Academic Blueprint would still guide academic master planning at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

However, subsequent to developing our Institutional Proposal and, indeed, since our CPR review, our academic planning process evolved so that what was once termed the Academic Blueprint, and the committee charged with developing it, no longer guide our academic planning process.

Rather, drawing upon the lessons learned from the Academic Blueprint process, we are developing and testing a refined and streamlined process that incorporates the best aspects of the Academic Blueprint—its emphasis on strategic thinking, involving multiple stakeholders, and using data to inform decision-making—and joins them with other key academic and administrative processes--primarily budgeting and program review. As a result, this essay will address a list of fifteen questions (IPQs) – slightly revised from the those in the Institutional Proposal - but they will not be its centerpiece. Instead , we have focused on one key outcome—***the development of our revised academic master planning process.*** (See Appendix A)

Background

Academic Master Planning efforts at CSUSM have produced a rich array of academic programs over the university's first two decades. The university's first published plan, the 1993 CSUSM University Academic Master Plan, reveals a complement of nine Bachelor of Arts degrees and three Bachelor of Science degrees with a number of others planned. Our most recent Board of Trustee-approved plan, the 2008 University Academic Master Plan, reflects the success of academic planning efforts over the last 15 years. CSUSM now offers twenty-seven (27) bachelor degree programs, ten (10) master degree programs, five (5) teaching credentials, four (4) advanced credentials and one (1) doctoral degree program.

These Academic Master Plans are official university documents, updated and submitted to the CSU Board of Trustees each year. The University Academic Master Planning Process Policy governs the addition of new programs to the plan. The first step in this process is the completion of a Program Abstract Form (A Form). The original A Form, conceived in 2001 and subsequently revised, provides proposers with a tool to announce their new program idea to the community. The form has evolved since its development to provide more information and greater clarity early in the planning process, including evidence of student demand from multiple sources (e.g. campus Career Center, feeder community college data, etc.) and preliminary estimates of resource needs. (IPQ 11) The A Form is considered complete once the proposer/originator, college curriculum /planning committee, and dean have signed off and it has been forwarded to the Associate Vice

President of Planning and Academic Resources. It is widely distributed to every member of Academic Affairs Leadership Council and members of the President's Cabinet . This cross-divisional distribution alerts all divisions of proposed programs so that they can provide feedback and begin thinking about resource implications for their own areas.(IPQ 9)

The A form, with the collective feedback obtained in the cross-divisional review process, is forwarded to the Academic Senate's Budget and Long Range Planning Committee (BLP), which assesses the information and makes recommendations as to whether the program should be added to the next UAMP. Academic Senate receives the BLP recommendation. If the program is placed on the UAMP, it constitutes the campus–level authorization to proposers to proceed with the next step in the process—submitting the new program proposal via the P Form.

The P Form process increases the detail of the program proposal to include an outline of the curriculum, specific courses, and a more detailed description of required resources. The current P Form reflects recent revisions from the Chancellor's office and revisions made by BLP in 2008 to increase analysis of resource requirements for the proposed program (see Section 6 of the P Form). Upon approval from the originating college, the P Form is circulated to the Deans of the Library and Instructional and Information Technology Services, VP of Student Affairs, and, if applicable, Director of Planning, Design and Construction. This assures that broad based resource perspectives are gathered and considered in the approval process. It also provides long range planning information for units that may need to allocate resources to support a new program as it is implemented. (IPQ 9)

After these signatures are obtained, the P Form is sent to the Academic Senate's University Curriculum Committee (UCC) and BLP. UCC and BLP perform distinctly different reviews of the proposal. UCC assesses the proposal for academic soundness and quality. BLP assesses whether or not the resource implications addressed in the proposal are aligned with program needs. After committee deliberations, UCC and BLP forward the proposal and committee recommendations to Academic Senate. The Academic Senate vote is the faculty's formal statement on the merits of the proposal. The final step in the approval process is the Provost, who reviews the proposal, takes under consideration the Academic Senate vote, and renders a campus decision on the proposal before forwarding it to the Chancellor's Office, where the ultimate decision to approve or disapprove the program is made.

The University Academic Master Planning process has proved a workable mechanism, both for adding programs to the University Academic Master Plan and for the approval of new programs. However, over the years, those involved with program planning have identified several gaps or shortcomings in the process. The two major gaps, discussed below, are:

1. The lack of an appropriate mechanism to generate a comprehensive list of programs to move through the process (i.e., it is not a *planning* process), and
2. A disconnect between the academic planning process and the campus's budgeting process. (i.e., the approval of a P Form by BLP does not indicate that resources have been allocated for the proposed program, only that they have been acknowledged and are aligned with the proposed program. (IPQ 8, 9)

As background for the first issue, just as the CSUSM degree profile has changed over time, the process by which the campus thought about its academic future has evolved. When the campus was founded, the first academic officers hired a group of senior faculty from across the country to spend a semester planning the campus's academic offerings. Their early work called for a menu of degree programs, chosen primarily from what the CSU considers foundational programs—a mix of traditional disciplinary programs in the liberal arts and sciences and basic professional degrees—along with a set of nationally recognized interdisciplinary degree programs. The emphasis on liberal learning has influenced the direction of academic planning throughout the campus's history and is one of the core values of the institution.

By the end of our first decade, however, the campus was experiencing difficulty moving its academic planning from its initial development of core programs to more fully embrace its mission as a comprehensive university meeting regional needs. Indeed, as we note in our Institutional Proposal, a Commission letter of 2000 commented on "the University's lack of clarity about how to proceed with the development of new programs to meet the emerging needs of the county and the state seems problematic." In order to address this issue, Academic Affairs established a committee, the Academic Blueprint Committee (ABC), in 2002 to expand the university's horizons beyond the core and to offer a roadmap for the development of degree programs over the next eight years.

The committee, which was representative of constituencies within Academic Affairs and beyond, developed a planning methodology informed by university and regional data, consulted with a broad range of stakeholders at the university and in the community, and began issuing a yearly report, beginning in 2003, along with a summary spreadsheet and timeline for recommended programs entitled the Academic Blueprint.

The first Academic Blueprint listed a total of 28 new degree programs or options within degree programs and projected start-up dates and initial enrollments and faculty complements. Subsequent reports deleted programs from the Academic Blueprint that had been approved, moved others to a waiting list, and added still others that the committee thought should be considered. The final Academic Blueprint issued by the committee in May 2006 listed 29 programs to be developed.

An analysis of the Academic Blueprints from 2003 to the present indicates that the Blueprint process was successful in its goal of expanding programs at CSU San Marcos and filling some significant gaps in our offerings (IPQs 1, 2, 3). Of the twenty-eight degree programs placed on the 2003 Academic Blueprint, ten have been implemented, including eight bachelor's degrees, and two graduate programs—a master's in digital history and the campus's first doctorate in educational leadership. Significantly, of the eight bachelor's degrees implemented, five were in the sciences (biochemistry, biotechnology, and applied physics) or related health areas (nursing, kinesiology), thus addressing gaps in areas of high regional demand. Five of these programs exceeded enrollment projected in the Academic Blueprint (IPQ 6).

An additional four programs from the initial Academic Blueprint are in final development and implementation stages, including a master's degree in nursing and one in communicative disorders, both of which would meet significant community need. Several programs from the initial Blueprint that have not yet been implemented have been added to the University Academic Master Plan, along with those from later iterations of the Blueprint. We anticipate their future development as resources to support them are identified.

As a start-up campus, CSUSM had hired faculty in core fields to develop degree programs. However, as the campus moved beyond start-up funding, it needed alternative models as committing resources to a tenure-track faculty line before program approval can be costly—particularly if a program is not approved. Another major accomplishment of the Academic Blueprint was thus providing several successful models for program development when specific campus expertise was lacking. To develop nursing, for example, an expert was hired as a consultant to write the program proposal and later became the founding faculty member and director of the School of Nursing. This provided a staged approach to allocating resources for the program development phase, followed by a tenure track faculty line for the implementation phase. Alternatively, an interdisciplinary team led by our Athletic Director and composed of campus faculty and a community college instructor with experience in kinesiology instruction, developed the program documents for kinesiology. This "hybrid" approach—using an interdisciplinary team and a community college colleague--also proved successful. (IPQ 4,5)

Despite its success at its primary task—projecting programs for campus development—and its contribution to models for program development, several shortcomings in the Academic Blueprint process became apparent by the fall of 2006. First, there was considerable campus confusion about the relationship between the UAMP and the Academic Blueprint. Although the first Blueprint clearly showed that the ABC was generating ideas for programs to be added to the UAMP, not supplanting it, the perception among many was that a program's appearance on the Blueprint was tantamount to a green light for program development. This confusion occasionally led to unrealistic expectations among members of both university and regional communities about promises of future programs. Second, confusion also existed about the roles of various stakeholders in the development of programs, particularly in the overlap between the ABC's planning function and BLP's long-term planning role. Finally, although the ABC had taken resource implications into account as it recommended programs for inclusion on the UAMP, a lack of alignment between the academic planning process and the campus's and division's budget allocation processes also led to unrealistic expectations on the part of program implementers.

A case in point was the proposed development of a College of Health and Human Services to house nursing and several health related programs on the Academic Blueprint. The search for a dean of the proposed college and for several tenure-track faculty for two of its programs—nursing and kinesiology—had to be called off in the fall of 2006 because of a lack of funding. (Nursing ultimately became a stand-alone school with its founding faculty member assuming administrative tasks and kinesiology is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences. Although faculty have joined the programs, their number is smaller than initially projected.)

While the AASP allows for a unified future path, it also accommodates the unique contributions and future aspirations of each unit in the division.

Given these issues and the fact that the Academic Blueprint had done its job of pointing the campus toward the future, the provost (who joined the campus in summer 2006) decided that AY0607 was an appropriate time to "sunset" the ABC and to begin exploring options for building upon the Blueprint's strengths, while correcting some of its weaknesses. (IPQ 7, 8, 9)

Progress Since the CPR Review

Since 2006, CSUSM's Division of Academic Affairs has been engaged in several separate, but interrelated, and ultimately reinforcing activities that inform our evolving academic master planning process. These include the development of unit three-year rolling plans, a division-wide strategic plan, a forecasting process, and a new, comprehensive process aligning academic planning and budget.

Three-year Rolling Plans

During the spring 2007 semester, the provost requested that all units in Academic Affairs, including the College of Education (CoE), the College of Arts and Sciences (CoAS), the College of Business Administration (CoBA), and the School of Nursing (SoN), prepare three-year rolling plans as the basis of their budget requests. These plans merged a narrative description of planning assumptions and programmatic initiatives with very specific and detailed information about related resource needs. In the case of the campus's largest college, (CoAS), the three-year rolling plan provided a mechanism for addressing the costs associated with its aspirational planning document—the CAMP. Although the other colleges and school—CoBA, CoE, and SoN—have not felt the need to develop a document as formal as the CoAS's CAMP, preferring to plan through their college governance processes such as the curriculum committees and executive committees/program leadership teams—the three-year rolling plans also served as a means of laying out their goals for the rest of the division and making transparent the costs associated with their own growth and development.

While providing instruments for evaluating budget requests, these three year rolling plans provide an integrated, multi-year perspective on program and new initiative planning within Academic Affairs (IPQ 9, 10, 12, 14) and, with revisions, will be a key component of the Division's aligned planning and budget processes.

Academic Affairs Strategic Plan (AASP)

In Spring 2008, with the adoption of a Resolution of Support in the Academic Senate, Academic Affairs completed the first phase of a two year strategic planning process in which the vision, mission, core values, and goals for the division have been formalized. The strategic plan provides focus and a unified future path for all twelve units within Academic Affairs. While the AASP allows for a unified future path, it also accommodates the unique contributions and future aspirations of each unit in the division. To assure alignment with the University's strategic direction, the AASP is rooted in the University Strategic Plan. This alignment provides for internal synergies, potential cross-divisional partnerships, and opportunities for external funding which can serve more than one purpose. The next step in the AASP process, which is being initiated in spring 2009, is the development of objectives by each unit in support of the goals. Moreover, it is expected that these objectives will not stand apart from, but will be incorporated into the units' three-year rolling plans, thus aligning programmatic development and budget requests and allocations.

Advancing the AASP must be done collaboratively among faculty, each Academic Affairs unit, the Academic Affairs leadership group, and the Provost. Academic Senate and its committees and Academic Affairs Leadership Council (AALC) are recognized entities where planning conversations have historically taken place. In order to increase opportunities for communication and collaboration around planning activities, in Fall 2008, the AALC annual planning retreat was expanded to include three members of Academic Senate (the Chair and Secretary of the Senate and the chair of BLP). In addition, the Chair of Academic Senate now attends all AALC meetings and, when budget and long range planning is on the agenda, the chair of BLP also attends.

These two new junctures of interaction between faculty representatives and AALC administrators provides an ongoing venue where the flow of ideas relative to the AASP to can be accessed by representatives of all planning stakeholder groups. It reinforces the notion that the nature of strategic academic master planning is not an event but a process. It also provides increased opportunity for an exchange of ideas and perspectives and the potential for increased trust among the participants, which then leads to more effective planning processes.

Forecasting is a process by which the University community considers emerging trends and internal/external factors...in the strategic academic planning process so we can, as the legendary hockey player Wayne Gretzky tells us, "go where the puck is going to be,"...

University Academic Master Plan Forecasting Committee (UAMPFC)

CSUSM's academic master planning has benefited since its inception from the internal expertise and passion of faculty, and this continues to be seen, particularly in the academic planning done within our colleges and school. The Academic Blueprint Committee provided a venue for joining faculty interest with information provided by community college partners, our career center, community partners and academic advisors, as well as information from various data banks about employment trends. In order that we not lose the synergies produced when various stakeholders join together, as they did in the ABC, Academic Affairs has proposed the

development of a new forecasting group, the University Academic Master Plan Forecasting Committee.

Forecasting is a process by which the University community considers emerging trends and internal/external factors that should be considered in the strategic academic planning process so we can, as the legendary hockey player Wayne Gretzky tells us, "go where the puck is going to be," rather than chasing it. Forecasting can place CSUSM in the place of greatest potential in terms of academic planning. The forecasting process is rooted in a new entity called the University Academic Master Plan Forecasting Committee. UAMPFC participants represent all units in Academic Affairs, Academic Senate committees and colleagues in other divisions (e.g Student Affairs, Institutional Planning and Analysis, Extended Studies and Development) who have knowledge of and interest in the academic planning process. UAMPFC participants receive and discuss data for consideration in determining the direction for future academic program development and other initiatives. Generally speaking, the UAMPFC is a "think tank." The committee does not make recommendations nor render decisions. Rather, it "scans the environment" for information that can inform planning efforts.

The UAMPFC convenes three times a year to receive and deliberate on: (1) university community data related to emerging discipline-specific programs; (2) community college/high school data related to identified areas of student interest; and (3) regional, statewide, nationwide and global data related to emerging career/expertise areas. Business and industry leaders, as well as regional, state and international data banks, are sources of information for this purpose. (IPQ_15) An annual summary of what is discovered in these sessions will be prepared by the AVP of Planning and Academic Resources and shared with a wide university audience to provide food for thought to Colleges, departments, program proposers, and administrators as they look for opportunities for program development and expansion.

Alignment of Budget and Planning Processes_

In the Fall of 2008, the campuswide University Budget Committee (UBC) began a review of the university level budget cycle and processes. The purposes of the review are to:

- develop a transparent budget process;
- plan for increased community understanding of the budget process and the factors impacting the revenue and expenditure elements of the budget;
- and to maximize the allocation of resources to strategic priorities, including balancing support for existing efforts and new initiatives.

We anticipate that UBC will be able to recommend to the President and her Executive Council a revised University budget development process during the Spring 09 for potential implementation for the AY1011. This effort will well serve the academic master planning processes in that the big picture in which Academic Affairs is situated will have greater clarity.

Simultaneously with the UBC budget process review, Academic Affairs also engaged in a budget process review. The purposes of the review are to:

- Refine the budget process to increase the knowledge base of budgetary principles among all parties;
- Provide a transparent process so all stakeholders can access and understand the budget process;
- More closely associate the academic planning process with the budget development process; and to allocate resources in a strategic manner.

In Fall 08, a work group comprised of the AA Budget and Resource Officer, Chair of BLP, AVP of Planning and Academic Resources, Associate Dean of CoAS, a unit Budget Manager, Assistant Director of the University Budget Office, and the Executive Assistant to the Provost was convened by the Provost to review and refine the AA budget processes. The work group devised an 18-month planning calendar that takes into account the budget and academic program planning cycles. It also integrates into the cycle the development of the three-year rolling plans discussed earlier and expanded upon below. This integration of budget and planning processes will allow BLP and AALC to benefit from complete knowledge of (1) the cost of sustaining and expanding established programs and (2) the initial and on-going costs of new programs. The process includes consultation between BLP and AALC (faculty and administrators) to review and discuss the three-year rolling plans and strategic priorities. This consultation is intended to promote an exchange of perspectives between faculty and administration in order to advance dynamic, informed and healthy discussions about resource allocation and timing of new initiatives, while not contravening the independent roles of BLP or AALC.

...an exchange of perspectives between faculty and administration in order to advance dynamic, informed and healthy discussions about resource allocation and timing of new initiatives...

As part of its work, the AA budget and planning work group reviewed the three-year rolling plan template used in 2006/07. It recommended refinements to increase the clarity of initial and ongoing resource needs for various unit initiatives, as well as the maintenance of ongoing services and programs, particularly as indicated in periodic program reviews. The three year rolling plans will inform the academic planning of the individual unit, the AALC, and the BLP as priorities are determined, goals set, and resources allocated. This integrated "all unit" picture of Academic Affairs provides all participants and decision-making bodies with the broadest and most detailed view of our collective future and allows for discussion of the needs of existing programs as we plan and implement new programs. This perspective is essential to making sound and rational decisions about the use of finite resources.

Challenges and Next Steps

While California's dire fiscal circumstances slowed the development of some of the initiatives discussed above, the twin challenges of frozen enrollment and no new funds to allocate has also provided us with an opportunity to evaluate, evolve, and align our processes. Our next steps will be to follow through in areas such as developing concrete academic objectives in support of our goals, testing and improving planning tools such as the three-year rolling plan templates, cultivating the knowledge and supporting the leadership of campus constituencies in order to maintain a focus on the future, and continually assessing whether or not our academic master planning meets the following prospective goals:

- Aligning planning efforts with the University and Academic Affairs Strategic Plan.
- Aligning budget and planning processes;
- Providing for the meaningful involvement and interaction of Academic Senate, Academic Affairs Leadership Council, and the Provost;
- Providing for "inside out" and "outside in" conversations about new programs;
- Taking into account resource allocation for existing and future programs;
- Seeking multiple ways to scale programs to budget realities;
- Encouraging proposers to have a future orientation.

3 Reflective Essay 2: Strengthening Academic Programs Through Assessment of Student Learning

Introduction

California State University San Marcos's 2005 Institutional Proposal detailed an ambitious plan for a collective review of student learning outcomes (SLOs). Our goal was to develop direct, valid, and sustainable measures of student learning that we would use for continuous evaluation and improvement. In terms of institutional learning, we articulated a vision of creating "a culture that fosters collective review of student learning and exchange of ideas about improving learning, and will institutionalize collection and assessment of authentic student work."

We had made qualified progress toward these goals at the time of our Capacity and Preparatory Review. While the WASC Visiting Team reported in Spring 2007 that "the University has significantly increased its capacity to support assessment from the department to the institutional levels," they also identified an "uneven" culture of evidence and a need to demonstrate more comprehensive use of assessment evidence in a feedback loop. They stated that "significant progress needs to be made with respect to the completion of learning assessments across programs so that evidence-based improvements can be implemented and evaluated in a timely cycle." The team characterized our first cycle of required assessment information from departments in 2005-06 as "disappointing" because of a participation rate of only 9 out of 28 departments. The team noted in particular the lack of SLOs for most of the University's graduate programs.

In its 2007 action letter, the team urged us to:

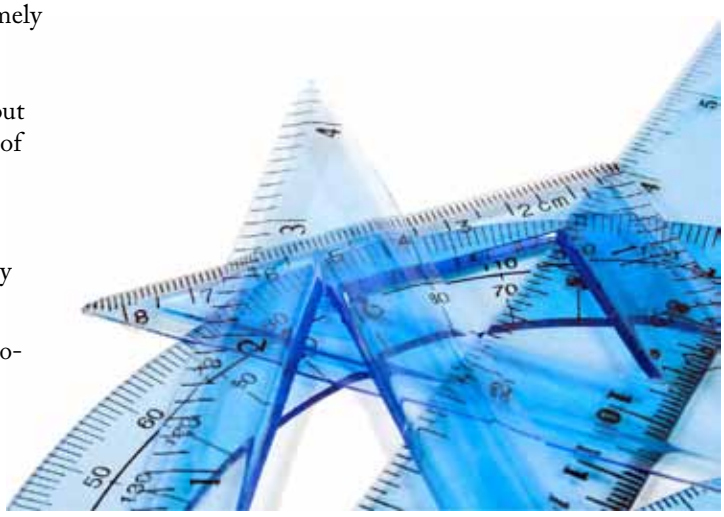
- "...incorporate direct assessment of learning more fully into all…academic and co-curricular programs,"
- "...continue to develop ways to assess the impact of its co-curricular programs on the formation of its graduates,"
- Use evidence, in the form of achievement data, to "inform program improvement" more consistently across the University, and to integrate a focus on assessment with plans for faculty and staff development.

In our work to address these concerns, we realized that a more tightly focused set of outcomes would help us investigate student learning at CSUSM in a deeper way and allow us to take more meaningful steps towards creating valid, useful, and sustainable feedback loops for assessment, revision, and improvement of educational effectiveness at the program and institutional level.

Further, we recognized that a university-wide engagement in assessment--the only way to move beyond uneven, piecemeal, or pro forma self-studies--would take both effort and ingenuity. Given divergent faculty reactions to a nationwide ethos of accountability and thus, to CSU assessment policies, a university-wide culture shift might be the biggest challenge in our ongoing development of institutional traditions of program improvement based on systematic inquiry into evidence of student learning.

Accordingly, we refined our list to focus on these four researchable outcomes:

- Improved understanding, grounded in evidence, of students' performance in the key common learning theme of writing;



- Data showing the evolution and publication of student learning outcomes for each major;
- Attention to the quality of student learning in periodic program review reports and annual assessment progress reports.
- Use of assessment findings at the course- or program-level in order to improve student learning;

These outcomes reflect our twin focus on (1) student learning and institutional learning and (2) systematic and sustained use of evidence-based inquiry to improve our effectiveness as an academic community.

Outcome 1: Improved Understanding, Grounded in Evidence, of Students' Performance in the Key Common Learning Theme of Writing

Background

Our 2005 proposal identified learning themes common to all academic programs, as well as themes specific to individual programs and program clusters, as a focus for self-study. Collecting direct evidence of our students' longitudinal gains in the key outcome of writing was one important focus because this outcome has always distinguished our campus. At the university's founding, we systematized writing ability as a shared outcome with a 2500-word writing requirement in all courses, regardless of discipline.

Since our original institutional proposal, our models for assessing writing have evolved to adapt to organizational changes and budget constraints, but we have continued to work on understanding our effectiveness in guiding students in the development of this fundamental skill. Our original proposal called for a multi-year research study in which the Office of Analytic Studies would sample student writing at several points in their academic progress. We could not sustain the original plan and began to explore an e-portfolio initiative that drew upon a model within our College of Education. This also proved unfeasible due to budgetary and personnel constraints.

We have, however, continued to develop meaningful assessments of writing both through our study of General Education (GE) outcomes and within individual programs. As we describe below, writing ability was selected as one of the two primary SLOs to be assessed in the first General Education Assessment Cycle. Disciplines across the University include writing as a program SLO, and departments as diverse as Mathematics, Sociology, Psychology, and Literature and Writing Studies all focused assessment projects on writing in 2007-08. The ability to write clearly and effectively remains the single most important SLO at CSUSM.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

With the appointments of the General Education Assessment Coordinator in AY0607, we were able to focus our study of student accomplishments in key common learning themes. The GE Assessment Coordinator, Psychology professor Sharon Hamill, worked with Associate Vice President for Academic Programs David Barsky and Librarian Gabriela Sonntag, Chair of our Senate Program Assessment Committee, to develop an instrument for systematic study of the two key General Education Learning Outcomes – information literacy and written communication.

In this model, different areas of GE are selected each semester (known as a "round") for inclusion in the assessment exercise. While the first round of courses was in the areas of Written Communication (A2) and Critical Thinking (A3), the second and third round sampled courses in Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning (B4); Social Science--US History (Dh); Social Science—US and California Government (Dc/g); and both interdisciplinary and discipline-specific Social Sciences (D, D7). Fall 2008 focused on C1/C2 (Arts and Humanities) and E (Lifelong Learning and Self-Development). We have already completed three rounds (one each for Spring 07, Fall 07, and Spring 08) of data generation representing direct evidence of student learning in the areas of information literacy and written communication

The most significant finding across all three rounds was that the majority of our students in the GE courses surveyed meet a minimum standard for all SLOs for written communication (thesis, organization, and mechanics) and information literacy (finding information and using information). Students were generally strong in finding information, but had difficulty in using it well. Other interesting results of this research include a positive correlation between students' grammar/mechanics scores and their scores in organization.

One implication of the data is that students may focus on specific tasks when taking courses within a particular area (e.g. focusing on thesis statements in writing classes and using sources in critical thinking courses), but may not transfer these skills across GE areas.

The results of the GE Assessment study has illustrated the significance to instructors of thinking carefully about bringing clear expectations for written communication into the foreground in courses whose primary focus is something other than writing. Further, the evidence provides instructors with key information about one place where learning breaks down in students' development of college-level writing skills, allowing for meaningful discussions among faculty and librarians with a goal of developing interventions to help students.

While the generation of direct evidence of student performance levels is critical to our continuous improvement efforts, it may be just as important that the GE Assessment Coordinator structured and implemented this assessment process purposefully to make it meaningful and sustainable within the existing culture of our university. First, faculty participation is voluntary, active, and "safe." The Coordinator contacts chairs at the beginning of the semester to explain the process and ask for permission to contact faculty who will teach GE courses in the target area. With the exception of one chair, who did not respond to the Coordinator's inquiry, all chairs gave permission for the Coordinator to contact the appropriate faculty. When meeting with interested faculty, the Coordinator fosters faculty engagement and buy-in by offering herself as an assessment consultant and volunteering to design an assessment question directed at an SLO of primary concern to the faculty member. After qualified faculty score the student papers using a common rubric, their department chairs, and the GEC receive the anonymized results. This anonymity allows for useful course, department, and potentially GE policy change without an unproductive focus on the merit of individual teachers or classes. The study's methodology thus strikes a crucial balance between scientific rigor and "faculty-friendliness."

This approach is a powerful form of organizational change, "one faculty member at a time." As the GE Assessment Coordinator collaborates with participating faculty on an individual basis to develop a meaningful assessment, they gain a better understanding of how assessment can help them meet their individual goals as committed teachers. Finally, by purposefully providing feedback to faculty on their own students' performance, the GE assessment process encourages their continued engagement in campus-wide conversations around student learning. In Fall 2008, three faculty asked for feedback on their own SLOs and one wants to conduct a survey, evidence that faculty are starting to trust the assessment process within this framework.

The first full year of GE Assessment maintained its three foundational goals: "(1) The assessment had to be meaningful to faculty who teach the courses; (2) The assessment had to provide information on key learning objectives for the GE program; (3) The assessment had to be sustainable (i.e., not require a great deal of work on the part of the faculty)." The results promise broader rewards for the University in the future. For example, data about first-year students' ability to locate and use information derived from the 2006 ETS iSkills test support the GE Assessment findings. All scores improved except those for defining an information need and for managing the information. The lowest pre- and post-test scores were in the key skill areas of evaluating sources and communicating information. This suggests that the GE Assessment study evidence is pertinent not only to GE courses, but also to many first-year courses.

Evidence corroborating the GE Assessment also came from the AY0708 Economics Department's annual assessment. One of their researchable questions targeted students' information literacy as it translates into research papers. Their suggested ways to intervene in this outcome--adding an annotated bibliography to their paper assignment and requiring students to make more use of the "important resource" of the librarian for economics--may spark parallel modifications in GE and other courses.

As we continue to gather direct evidence, from multiple sources, of students' performance in writing, we can also learn from comparisons to indirect evidence of student learning in this outcome. For example, in the 2008 administration of the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE), 83.1% of first-year respondents and 92.3% of senior respondents reported that their coursework had placed "substantial emphasis" on papers or projects that required them to integrate ideas or information from various sources. The combined evidence suggests that our students have many occasions to learn and practice information literacy skills. Targeted interventions may address the remaining area of weakness in information use.

The study's methodology thus strikes a crucial balance between scientific rigor and "faculty-friendliness."

Because our evolving campus culture now includes both a focus on inquiry and more systematic ways to share information across the University, we can work with complementary evidence to make effective changes across multiple disciplines and courses. This multi-layered, resonant situation exemplifies what it means to be a "learning organization."

Challenges and Next Steps

The General Education Assessment plan is working its way through all five areas of GE courses to study the outcomes of Written Communication and Information Literacy. Given that the GE Assessment Coordinator has already assessed 19 different courses and 1800 pieces of student writing, with the involvement of nearly 50 faculty including both tenure-track professors and lecturers, this study promises to provide us with a substantial database of evidence about when and where our students demonstrate satisfactory accomplishment in writing and information literacy. This will allow us further inquiry about how and why they learn or fail to learn two key skills of successful college-level writing.

The growing body of evidence from this study points to needed change, not only at the course or program level, but also in a wider context. For example, when we set about to "assess student learning in GE" we needed to go back and see what our GE goals and intended outcomes were. They had been revised many times, but only piecemeal and not in fully coherent ways. Accordingly, the GEC began a discussion aimed at clarifying our GE outcomes last year, including an Academic Affairs Town Hall on General Education. Coincidentally, the CSU system was re-evaluating the old Executive Order 595 (Graduation, Requirements for General Education - Breadth Requirements) which governed GE. Its 2008 successor, Executive Order 1033 (General Education Breadth Requirements), shifts the foundational discussions on general education from a "coverage" paradigm to the learner-centered model of student learning outcomes.

This approach is a powerful form of organizational change, "one faculty member at a time."

In light of the fact that we already began wrestling with these issues last year, we are well-poised to respond to the mandate of EO 1033: "Each CSU campus shall define its GE student learning outcomes, to fit within the framework of the four 'Essential Learning Outcomes' drawn from the Liberal Education and American Promise (LEAP) campaign, an initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities." This work is being carried out in part at the GEC, but will also take place in campus-wide discussions. The GE assessment of the key learning outcome of writing is thus a key part of a much larger institutional conversation about general education.

Another next step is to extend this work beyond General Education to look more closely at writing in the majors and at the graduate level, research that individual departments are already doing in their annual assessments. One of the important governance decisions of AY07-08 was the Academic Senate's approval of a Graduate Studies Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement Policy, including a writing rubric, from the Senate's Academic Policy Committee (APC), requiring each graduate program to determine that students have met graduate-level writing competency before advancing to candidacy, as required by the Chancellor's office. This is one example of our attention to extending quality control of student learning to graduate studies.

The common learning theme of writing has distinguished CSUSM from its earliest days. External evidence confirms that our emphasis on writing is well aligned with the needs of employers, as documented in the National Commission on Writing report Writing: A Ticket to Work…or a Ticket Out: A Survey of Business Leaders. Indirect evidence suggests that students are very much aware of writing's centrality as an SLO at CSUSM. For example, in the 2008 NSSE our students not only report writing frequently, but also say that their education at CSUSM has contributed in positive ways to their writing ability. Specifically, 82.7% of first-year respondents, and 88.9% of senior respondents, say that their education has contributed "very much or quite a bit" to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the area of "writing clearly and effectively." Similarly, in a 2008 alumni survey conducted by Institutional Planning and Analysis, when we asked our graduates what skills their field of study at CSUSM had enhanced "a great deal," the largest percent of such responses (61.5%) went to writing, greater than to any of the other eight skills on the list.

Extensive evidence also points, however, to the importance of individualized writing instruction and intensive feedback as central to effective training in both basic college writing and writing in the disciplines. Maintaining student-faculty ratios that permit effective writing pedagogy across the disciplines and throughout degree trajectories is a persistent challenge given state budget pressures. An important future plan may be to create a university-wide conversation on the conditions for the sustainability of the writing requirement, since it is such a significant part of our identity as a campus.

Outcome 2: Data Showing the Evolution and Publication of Student Learning Outcomes for Each Major

Background

At the time of the 2007 CPR Visit, all majors had developed SLOs, but few of them had been systematically reviewed or widely distributed. It was apparent to the Academic Senate's Program Assessment Committee (PAC), the group charged with overseeing SLO development and assessment,

that some departments needed help in developing program-level student learning outcomes that clearly outlined what students would know, think, or be able to do to demonstrate their learning. Others had SLOs that were overly detailed and did not address learning at the program level.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

One of our major achievements is our progress regarding the formulation, revision, and dissemination of programmatic student learning outcomes (PSLOs). Beginning with annual reports in 2006/07, each program was required to review its PSLOs and submit them for publication in the new catalog. The PAC, AVP Barsky, and external assessment consultant, Dr. Peggy Maki, reviewed the PSLOs and provided feedback. Several departments incorporated Dr. Maki's comments into their revisions. All undergraduate programs now have their PSLOs published in the 2008-2010 catalog.

In addition, programs undergoing their 5-year review are asked to produce a learning outcomes matrix where these outcomes are mapped according to which courses introduce the outcomes, which ones reinforce them and where they are assessed. This important tool provides departments with a basis for discussions surrounding student learning and program design and is being incorporated into a revised program review procedure, under development by PAC

Another important accomplishment is our progress in the development and publication of student learning outcomes for all ten graduate programs. As of the end of Fall 2008, eight of our ten Master's programs have PSLOs published in the course catalog, and the other two programs have developed student learning outcomes that will be included in the next catalog. PSLOs are easily found on our assessment website, another important form of publication that spans internal and external audiences, including current and prospective students, as well as its primary audience of faculty, staff, and administrators.

Three modes of publication reinforce SLOs as a campus norm for program and course development. The template used to propose new programs, the P Form, the practice of the Academic Senate's University Curriculum Committee (UCC) asking that all new course proposals specify the course-level SLOs, and the inclusion of SLOs in annual assessment progress reports (described below) are evidence a culture of assessment has been advanced since the CPR.

Even more significant evidence of our learning as an institution is many of these changes have been self-initiated. For example, before it was mandated by the CSU system, our template for new program development required a matrix mapping PSLOs by courses in which they are addressed, as well as an assessment plan for the program.

In CoBA, CoE, and School of Nursing, SLOs and the broader culture of assessment are informed by accountability to professional accrediting agencies. CoE maintains state and national accreditation through the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education). In the School of Nursing, the pre-licensure components of the program have been approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing; the initial accreditation visit from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education took place in November 2008 and, based on the exit interview, a full five-year accreditation is expected. As it works toward accreditation, CoBA is guided by the standards of the American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business, the international accrediting agency for schools of business.

Challenges and Next Steps

Measurable progress has been made, but there is still work to be done. Writing PSLOs that are clear and measurable, as well as distinct from similar programs, is not a skill learned overnight. Several programs face the challenge of coordinating shared PSLOs with distinct option-level PSLOs. Once we meet the goal of publishing all PSLOs in multiple venues so current and prospective students can learn about our programs, the main challenge will be to continue to refine those outcomes to provide the best possible alignment with program requirements, curricular roadmaps, and course content. Refocusing the emphasis of program reviews to include a systematic review of both the PSLOs and their incorporation into program requirements, including a review of relevant course syllabi, will go a long way to ensuring that faculty understand the value of establishing, disseminating, and assessing SLOs. The support provided by the Learning Outcomes Assessment Fellow, described under Outcome 3, will also contribute significantly to a culture of assessment.

The common learning theme of writing has distinguished CSUSM from its earliest days.

Outcome 3: Attention to the Quality of Student Learning in Periodic Program Review Reports and Annual Assessment Progress Reports

Program Reviews - Background

The continuing evolution of our program review process to place increased scrutiny on what, when, how, and why students learn during their coursework documents our dedica-

tion to making this process functional and sustainable. As our CPR documented, we have been revising our program review process since 2004. In 2005-06, PAC designed pilot program review guidelines that focused on deep analysis of a few key SLOs rather than a comprehensive review. The pilot guidelines required departments to systematically review their PSLOs, create a matrix, and focus on one or two of these outcomes by developing and implementing an assessment instrument to measure student achievement. Programs also selected an additional area of focus, such as mentoring, remediation, resources or others traditionally included in a comprehensive self-study. Several programs used the pilot guidelines to review their undergraduate programs, and one used them to complete its M.A. self-study.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

Programs and external reviewers contributed to the general feedback for the pilot guidelines described above. The consensus was that they did not allow for enough of a review in terms of both the capacity of the department to deliver the academic degree program and the program's educational effectiveness. Thus, with this input, and since the campus's CPR visit, PAC has refocused attention on the official program review document, making extensive changes to assure focus on the student learning outcomes assessment, while at the same time allowing departments to conduct a self-study on a selection of items rather than burden them with a full review. This compromise was intended to alleviate the faculty workload, stress the importance of departmental discussions, and thus make the program review more meaningful.

PAC's revised review proposal, which includes program review cycles and incorporates the annual assessment plans and reports, is detailed and explicit in its rationale, requirements, and timelines. The self-study process includes analysis of the program's learning outcomes, as well as assessments of direct as well as indirect evidence. Both internal and external audiences review the self-study, and the policy explicitly includes student input. Further, the revised policy includes two-person external review teams, which offers a more balanced external perspective than the single reviewer that was the original practice. Feedback to departments provides closure to one review cycle and a catalyst for the next one.

A significant element of the revised plan is the evolution of distinct and detailed guidelines for graduate program reviews. Before the creation of the pilot revised program review guidelines, little had been done to separate the review of graduate programs from that of the undergraduate degrees, and internal and external reviewers attended primarily to the undergraduate degree programs. When the pilot guidelines were developed, they included a draft graduate studies document.

After numerous revisions, these guidelines were presented to the University Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). A subgroup of the GSC met with the PAC chair to continue to review and discuss the document. These guidelines for graduate programs were piloted in subsequent years by Psychology, Biological Sciences, and Literature and Writing Studies. A further reflection of how we have extended program assessment to our growing community of graduate programs is the Dean of Graduate Studies' participation on the PAC as an ex officio member.

In AY0708, PAC shared the revised Program Review Policy with the faculty in both formal and informal venues. The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, and then the Senate itself, discussed PAC's Program Review Policy Resolution several times in AY0708. The larger academic community learned more about the revised policy draft through an informative Academic Affairs Town Hall on Program Assessment, in which PAC teamed with the GE Assessment Coordinator to engage faculty perceptions, resistance, and questions about sustainable and rewarding assessment practices.

While the proposed revision did not pass the Senate in spring 2008, many of the changes to the original Program Evaluation and Planning (PEP) document are actually occurring. Academic Programs has made a commitment to using two-person external review teams to provide a more balanced and useful perspective. The assessment website streamlines program review and makes it visible to various audiences, enabling departments to both learn from each other and see connections they can use to improve student learning. And, perhaps most significantly from the perspective of assessing student learning outcomes, programs are not seeing that as a process to be undertaken only every five years as part of a program review. Instead, they are viewing outcomes assessment as an ongoing process that is cumulatively documented in the periodic program review.

Annual Assessment Progress Reports - Background

Growing out of the Theme 2 taskforce that wrote our original WASC proposal in 2004, annual assessment reports became a required element of the end-of-the-year reports that each department chair sends to his or her college dean. Beginning in 2005-2006, each department has been expected to submit an annual plan for assessment activities and a report on activities completed in the previous academic year.

Annual assessment progress reports are a particularly effective method for promoting the study of narrowly focused, researchable indicators of student learning with the promise of yielding valuable information departments and programs can use to modify practices to improve student learning. The annual assessment report forms are carefully structured, prompting departments to specify in Part A what was measured, and how, and how faculty will apply the results of assessment at the program and course level for continuous improvement. Part B asks what one or two specific student learning outcomes will be assessed in the upcoming academic year and how. It closes with a request for information on

resources to support the assessment. The structure of the process guides faculty through a complete feedback loop, links the process to university resources as an expected and necessary element of a successful culture of evidence, and inscribes a culture of evidence as part of our normal work as educators.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

PAC brought two resolutions to the Academic Senate in support of assessment. A special task force's formal report concluded with a resolution requesting that the campus administration set aside funding for assessment of student learning. This resolution passed the Senate in December 2005. Funding for annual program assessment activities was identified by Academic Affairs, starting in the fall of 2006 and is now a part of the permanent budget, thus far untouched by budget reductions.

AY0708 was the first full year of successful implementation. Programs submitted a fall plan for assessment activities and a spring report on assessments conducted during the year, along with a plan for AY0809. PAC received plans from over 90% of programs and reports from over 75% of programs. In AY0708, most departments made use of budget support for assessment plans, applying for a total of $70,500; a total of over $25,500 was awarded. We have already refined the process for responding to funding requests. In AY0708, PAC advised AVP Barsky and Graduate Dean González on how to respond to funding requests. Requests are now reviewed by Learning Outcomes Assessment Faculty Thomas, AVP Barsky, and Graduate Dean González. The allocations are reported back to PAC.

The structure of the process guides faculty through a complete feedback loop, links the process to university resources as an expected and necessary element of a successful culture of evidence, and inscribes a culture of evidence as part of our normal work as educators.

A second key governance action supporting Outcome 3 was the Academic Senate's approval in AY0708 of the PAC Resolution recommending the creation of a position of a Learning Outcomes Assessment Fellow in the office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs. Although the campus was facing budget cuts, Academic Affairs recognized the importance of this position and funded it beginning in Fall 2008. Our first Fellow, Dr. Marie Thomas, is a senior faculty member in Psychology, highly regarded by her colleagues for her scholarship, teaching, and distinguished record of service to faculty and students, which includes leadership in the departments of Psychology and Women's Studies and the Faculty Center/Faculty Mentoring Program. The Senate's endorsement of this role, the multiple applicants for the position, and the fact that our first Fellow is a particularly esteemed faculty member, are promising indicators of an effective shift in faculty culture regarding learning outcomes assessment. Reinforcing this shift, the Fellow's role is not only to guide programs in their development and use of SLOs, but also to offer positive and constructive feedback that acknowledges and values their efforts on behalf of the program and University.

The support provided by the Learning Outcomes Assessment Fellow and the funding distributed for PSLO assessment are crucial elements of the both the annual outcomes assessment reports and the refocused program review process. They provide the underpinning for faculty to embrace learning outcomes assessment and program review as opportunities for reflective discussions and revision, and for a broader process of institutional learning similar to what we have seen as a result of the work of the GE Assessment Coordinator.

Challenges and Next Steps

PAC is currently reevaluating the most effective way to reopen the Senate conversation about the Program Review Policy. One major challenge has been our ability to situate program review within the decision-making processes of the campus so that it informs future program development or changes and, more importantly, is used at the college and university level to impact future budgeting and strategic planning conversations. In addition, PAC plans to discuss specific guidelines for the external reviewers, offer more information on the assessment website, and further develop PAC guidelines for reviewing the annual assessment reports/plans to provide better quality feedback to the programs as well as a guide for funding recommendations. They plan to conduct a faculty survey on the program review process. A meeting of anyone interested in sharing assessment strategies is another plan for the future, sparked by a faculty comment at the Academic Affairs Town Hall. Finally, PAC is working to give faculty a clearer sense of how annual assessment plans and cyclical program reviews intertwine and how both are an integral part of academic planning and resource allocation.

We have made significant strides with the continuing revision of our program review process and in our implementation of annual assessment progress reports and plans. PAC has continued to refine and develop the Program Review Policy to make it not only a meaningful tool for educational improvement, but also realistic both in its scope and its contextualization within university resources. While the revised policy has not yet received approval from the Academic Senate, many of its elements are being applied on a voluntary basis. Not every program is convinced of the value of assessment plans and reports, but most have participated in them, and many have found them to be useful in rethinking and improving the curriculum.

Outcome 4: Use of Assessment Findings at the Course- or Program-level in Order to Improve Student Learning

Background

We are in the process of evolving habits and systems of assessing educational effectiveness through learning outcomes. In many cases we are just beginning the more difficult process of aligning curriculum, assignments, and assessments in terms of those outcomes. Our recent practices, from departmental assessment projects and program reviews to College-wide and College-specific initiatives, demonstrate that our efforts to develop a wider and deeper culture of assessment are having a positive effect.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

We are pleased to share several concrete illustrations of how faculty and staff have used evidence to "close the assessment loop" since the CPR visit. Recent examples from the three Colleges exemplify effective use of direct evidence of student learning in key outcomes to support learning at the course and program level. We also note in the conclusion that the use of data in improving programs and services to students is alive and well in Student Affairs as well as in Academic Affairs. This attention to data as the foundation for making decisions indicates that the CSUSM culture as a learning organization is maturing across divisions.

College of Arts and Sciences (CoAS)

"The AY0708 annual department assessment reports offer productive examples of assessing learning goals and, in a number of cases, "closing the loop" by altering pedagogical approaches and revising curricula. For example, Political Science assessed an SLO requiring students to "demonstrate working knowledge of research methods by applying said methods to critically analyze political phenomena." Using a pre-test/post-test design, students demonstrated their working knowledge of research methods at the beginning and end of the semester by developing their own research designs. Student submissions were analyzed using a rubric developed by two faculty members. While most students performed poorly on the pre-test, considerable improvement was evident by the end of the semester. However, students continued to struggle with certain concepts and skills, such as identifying independent and dependent variables, writing survey questions, and drawing conclusions about data. These results provided concrete evidence of areas that require more student practice and, perhaps, new ways of approaching and teaching the material. Political Science faculty will continue work on this SLO during AY0809.

The Communication Department used in-class exercises and graded papers in five sections of COMM 200 to assess the outcome "Recognize and account for one's standpoint within diverse communication situations." Evidence collected during Fall 07 suggested that students' comprehension of "standpoint" varied greatly, even at the end of the semester This evidence resulted in faculty placing more emphasis on discussing the concept during Spring 08. According to the report, "(p)reliminary results from the Spring semester suggest the implemented change resulted in markedly increased comprehension for students." Faculty will continue to analyze, discuss, and apply these results and will collect additional data regarding students' understanding of the concept of "standpoint" during AY0809.

The Sociology Department chose two related SLOs which assess skills for both of its majors, Sociology and Criminology and Justice Studies: "can locate, understand, summarize, and synthesize scholarship" and "can write a literature review and research report that conforms to the professional norms of sociological scholarship." An assessment team of four faculty developed a rubric to analyze student papers from the department's capstone course. Results of the assessment demonstrated that student papers reflected thoughtful sociological insights and cumulative sociological knowledge; however, they are not as skillful at critically assessing the scholarship they locate. They also need to improve their ability to apply what they learn in the literature to their experiences in a field setting. The next step for these programs is to amend their practices in light of these findings.

In its program review, the Economics Department studied undergraduate students' mastery of essential concepts and skills on which performance in required upper-division microeconomics theory courses depends. As well as identifying skills in which students needed more preparation, the program found that where students took their lower-division principles courses was significant. The upper-division course may be modified based on what was learned about incoming students' skill set. The program has been encouraged to apply for grants available through the *North County Higher Education Alliance*, a regional higher education consortium comprised of CSUSM and its two primary feeder community colleges, to start a conversation with community college colleagues about how to improve transfer students' preparation.

The Psychology Department's program review studied issues related to student development and preparedness throughout the levels of their undergraduate program. The review also addressed designing an assessment instrument to measure skills related to an American Psychological Association goal for the undergraduate psychology major, "working knowledge of the principles of research design and an ability to apply them." While the assessment of students' knowledge of basic descriptive and inferential statistics and research methods concepts revealed "statistically significant increases in student total scores following course progression in the major," the department found that the scores themselves were not as high as expected. They proposed a range of four interventions including embedding assessments in key courses, finding self-assessment tools to help students track and address areas of weakness, collaborating with community college colleagues, and engaging part-time faculty in the issues by sharing findings with them.

In its M.A. program review, Psychology targeted the outcomes of graduate-level writing skills and professionalization. One researchable question the program targeted was whether or not students were meeting the objectives associated with the outcome of learning professional behavior and whether or not faculty were clearly articulating their expectations for such behavior. The department wanted to know if a targeted emphasis on communicating these objectives would increase student learning of professional behaviors. They found that such an emphasis did make a difference, as "these data suggest that discussing the importance of attending proposals, defenses, and job talks helps to establish an expectation that students should participate as part of their professional development." Further, they found that the major impact was in attendance at peer presentations, suggesting that "it will be important for us to continue with our professional socialization of graduate students to ensure that they understand the importance of supporting their colleagues as well as providing feedback for use in making hiring decisions."

Literature and Writing Studies focused its M.A. program review on the learning outcome of graduate-level writing that demonstrates advanced knowledge of and engagement in the field's key theories and practices by using "a range of critical and theoretical approaches" appropriately in seminar papers. By developing a rubric and assessing samples from an entry-level course and a second-year course, faculty established students' competence in understanding theory, but identified a need for more practice synthesizing it into original textual analyses. The short-term result was to modify the entry-level course in the next semester; longer-term plans include modification of course requirements and new course development.

Across CoAS, we are already seeing examples of programs using the GE assessment study to improve student learning. The assessment study data will be used to inform the redesign of GEW 101, *Principles of Written Communication* which will impact not only this course, but student writing more generally across the curriculum In the Mathematics Department, some faculty have reintroduced into quizzes student-written descriptions of how they solved problems. The recognition that students have trouble using information led to additional investigative assessments of information literacy in the Psychology Department's annual assessment. Dr. Oliver Berghof found that the assessment information from GE classes gave him "a sense of how the students had arrived in each of these classes and how prepared they were," data which led him to initiate a Literature and Writing Studies departmental discussion of curriculum mapping based on assumptions about students' preparedness at each level. Through the assessment, he also gained a potentially useful "understanding of how GEL and GEW and a lower-division GE course such as LTWR 115 could work hand-in-hand, mutually reinforcing key components of the students' study and writing skills."

College of Business Administration (CoBA)

CoBA offers several examples of using assessment data to improve student learning, both in response to WASC outcomes and in adherence to peer and state standards. One CoBA PSLO is to "demonstrate an understanding of fundamental business concepts." Assessment of this outcome is done through an exit test developed collectively by various CSU Business Schools. CoBA administers the exam to all graduating students and it is also given by other CSUs (approximately 14 per academic year). Comparison data is available from other participating campuses along with results for this campus, broken down by question and subject matter, as well as student option. This has given faculty information to determine what, if any, curricular changes are in order.

Another PSLO is oral presentation skills. A faculty panel developed a rubric that would facilitate comparison across the College and could be adapted for individual discipline presentations. The generic rubric facilitates assessment of student oral presentations in the areas of: personal appearance, organization, delivery, visuals, and content. The two-page format of the rubric was designed to allow assessment of presentations in real-time and is structured to facilitate data collection and feedback to students. The rubric was pilot tested by faculty who used the rubric to assess five Senior Experience team presentations viewed from the College's MediaSite archive. The panel found the format acceptable for real-time assessment and developed a final version of the rubric that was presented to Senior Experience students as a guide for developing their final presentations. This common rubric will facilitate assessment of oral presentations skills across the Business Program and disciplines. Feedback from College faculty suggests a willingness to adopt the rubric throughout the Business Program.

College of Education (CoE)

CoE delivers post-baccalaureate and graduate level programs. As a credentialing body, CoE maintains state and national accreditation and is therefore required to maintain an organized and rigorous assessment system. The assessment system is focused on candidate performance and mastery of the curriculum in order to meet state teacher credential requirements.

Curriculum in CoE for all basic credential programs is organized around the California Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs). The TPEs are Student Learning Outcomes and are measured in course curriculum and clinical practice experiences. There are 12 state mandated TPEs and 4 local CSUSM TPEs. Critical assessment tasks (i.e. SLOs) linked to specific TPEs are taught and evaluated in each credential course. Student performance on the critical assessment tasks is tracked through an electronic portfolio. As a summative assessment of candidate knowledge, program faculty regularly use these data to adjust curriculum and teaching practices.

TPEs are also assessed and evaluated in teacher candidate's Clinical Practice I and II experiences. University supervisors engage in formative assessment through regularly scheduled observations of candidates in elementary and secondary classrooms. Supervisors review the observation with the candidate, according to the TPEs, and provide feedback for improving the candidate's performance. As a summative assessment, all TPEs must be assessed as met for a candidate to successfully complete Clinical Practice I or II. University supervisors write a summative evaluation of candidate performance on the TPEs for each clinical practice experience. Trends in performance are reviewed and utilized in University supervisor training meetings to improve the quality of supervision.

Beginning in July 2008, the state mandated a Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) that evaluates teacher candidate understanding and performance of the TPEs. The TPA is composed of four separate tasks (i.e. SLOs) each teacher candidate must successfully complete. Each task is evaluated by independent assessors and scored according to a standardized rubric. Each candidate must pass each task with a minimum score of 3 out of possible 4 and must attain an overall score of 12 to be recommended for a teaching credential.

The CoE engaged in a pilot implementation of the TPA during AY0708 academic year. As a result of the pilot implementation, faculty engaged in preliminary course curriculum redesign and update, as well as program evaluation for both Single Subject and Multiple Subject programs.

The CoE implemented TPAs in Fall 2008 in all basic credential programs. Initial outcomes indicate that less than 10% of students required remediation on the first two tasks of the TPA. The CoE is currently engaged in a deliberate and reflective examination/refinement of curriculum and program structure in the Multiple Subject and Single Subject programs using TPA data as a source of reflection.

Student Affairs

On a broader scale, our culture of assessment has expanded beyond the Division of Academic Affairs. The Division of Student Affairs (SA) has been actively building capacity to infuse assessment into its daily work. During the spring and fall of 2007, SA piloted a learning outcomes project in which units whose mission related to lifelong or transformational learning crafted learning outcomes and assessed student learning on a chosen theme. SA's theme was one of the sixteen student learning and development outcome domains as suggested by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). In the Spring of 2008, SA appointed the Student Affairs Assessment Team to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment training and implementation to date and to recommend improvements to the program. After much deliberation, the foundation for SA's assessment program was changed from CAS Standards themes to the Division's mission and vision statement. Furthermore, the assessment team recommended expanding the focus of the program beyond student learning to include assessment of service quality and effectiveness.

The importance of the partnership of the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in the educational effectiveness quest of CSUSM cannot be overstated. The power of these two divisions generating data, sharing data and using data in order to strengthen programs and services to students is synergistic.

Incorporating direct assessment of learning into co-curricular programs and measuring the impact of these programs on our students' careers is another next step. We have made progress in our attention to this charge in our focus on first-year students, as we note in Reflective Essay Three. What we learn from these initiatives will inform our overall focus on

co-curricular assessment in future years. On a larger scale, during AY0809, every Student Affairs unit will write service and/or learning outcomes grounded in the Division's mission and vision and pilot an assessment of service and/or learning effectiveness. Every unit manager will report assessment results in the Division's AY0809 annual report, and plans for AY0910 will be submitted to each of the three area Associate Vice presidents. Student Affairs believe these changes will further institutionalize assessment into the daily work of each Student Affairs unit and promote a culture of evidence based decision making for continuous improvement and high quality student services.

The importance of the partnership of the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in the educational effectiveness quest of CSUSM cannot be overstated. The power of these two divisions generating data, sharing data and using data in order to strengthen programs and services to students is synergistic. That is, our combined action will result in value added to students beyond our individual division efforts. Although in its nascent form at present, the commitment to using data in powerful ways is now well rooted in our collective mind and practice and, therefore, the culture has begun to shift.

Challenges and Next Steps

Achieving more evidence of improvement in key student learning outcomes is a compelling professional goal. At present, we face some challenges as we focus our efforts on that goal.

We are already seeing examples of faculty effectively using assessment tools to research students' acquisition of skills in general education and the disciplines, and using evidence from assessment to improve students' learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Until the proposed Revised Program Review Policy gains Senate approval, however, it may be difficult for some faculty to leave behind the debate about assessment and focus on using assessment activities in a sustainable and productive way to evolve courses and programs in alignment with departmental missions and values. Faculty have made it clear that they need explicit guidelines on how expected faculty work in outcomes assessment and program review will be informed by the University's budget and planning processes. In addition, faculty have indicated current Retention, Promotion, and Tenure policies and procedures must be aligned with the expectation that assessment will be an integral part of the teaching life at CSUSM. Resolving these important governance questions will help us move more explicitly towards a shared focus on improved student learning outcomes.

Conclusion

As the WASC visiting team noticed during their CPR visit, we are a campus "in a period of transition and growth." While culture shifts are continuous on many campuses, a tipping point has clearly occurred at CSUSM, making our involvement in assessment of student learning palpable in ways it has not been in the past. We have become a university community actively engaged not only in assessment practices, but also in assessment conversations. Attention to measurable outcomes permeates our campus dialogues, whether in the context of classroom learning or in that of governance. There is already a de facto shift from a focus on assessment only during lengthy periodic reviews to a continuous process of assessment. We are evolving support for this process through assessment funding, the GE Assessment Coordinator, and the Learning Outcomes Assessment Fellow, and faculty are clearly using these resources.

CSUSM has evolved from a young university to a more established one with the capacity, motivation, and need to reflect in a systematic, data-driven way on the intertwined processes of teaching and learning.

The culture shift will never be even or universal. Our faculty and student affairs professionals, a community of vibrant and distinguished educators, researchers, scholars, creators, and activists, has diverse responses to assessment, particularly as a politicized term; they have expressed important concerns about the need to allocate university resources to sustain a formalized culture of evidence in the context of faculty and staff workloads, especially in a time of budget constraints. Engagement has many faces, however, and consensus is only one of them. Our sometimes argumentative focus on assessment is also a measure of institutional learning. CSUSM has evolved from a young university to a more established one with the capacity, motivation, and need to reflect in a systematic, data-driven way on the intertwined processes of teaching and learning. We are developing our skill and will to disaggregate relevant threads of data that have been identified as significant to catalyzing or hindering student success, which is our common goal.

4 Reflective Essay 3: Improving Retention of First-Year Students

Introduction

California State University San Marcos's 2005 Institutional Proposal articulated our concerns about one-year continuation rates for first-time freshman students, as well as our plans to implement and evaluate interventions to improve retention rates. We established a diverse, broad-based committee of administrators, staff, and faculty to guide our research into this theme, later forming subcommittees and work groups to refine our inquiry process. To further define our goals for *Improving Retention of First-Year Students*, we established six researchable outcomes to guide our process of evaluating and developing our capacity to measure educational effectiveness.

The six outcomes were not discrete elements but interdependent threads in a web of initiatives supporting student success in their first year. These outcomes reflected our commitment to foster campus diversity by improving access to higher education. Access is not simply admitting students, but more importantly, systematically providing support for their persistence towards a college degree. Several outcomes focus on the distinct learning needs of special populations of first-year students. By supporting the success of students who reflect the full diversity of our community and region, we sustain and expand the cultural and intellectual richness of our campus community.

In our CPR report, we reaffirmed our commitment to address retention rates of first-year students by researching the contexts for our successes and challenges in these outcomes. After the WASC Team's CPR Visit, we revised our six outcomes to incorporate our successful application to the Foundations of Excellence® initiative and active engagement in a self-study facilitated by this program. We also added an outcome on campus learning centers and removed the outcome related to the perceptions of first-year student entry preparation levels.

Reflective Essay 3 engages this revised set of seven outcomes:

- Upward movement in the campus's one-year continuation rate for first-time freshmen;
- A significant improvement in the percentage of students who become successfully remediated in mathematics and/or English within one year of entry;
- More readily available advising services for incoming freshmen and greater student satisfaction with them;
- Improved academic performance and retention of freshmen participating in an intensive summer program and/or a learning community;
- Strengthening our campus learning assistance centers;
- An increase in the percentage of minority students among the first-time freshmen returning for a second year of study;
- Development of a campus-wide "Action Plan for First-Year Improvement" based on the comprehensive Foundations of Excellence (FoE®) process in AY0708.

In this essay, we analyze how effectively our systems of remediation, advising, summer programs for special populations, student support centers, and ongoing FoE® self-study foster improved first-year retention rates, with special emphasis on progress since the CPR.

The WASC CPR Team advised us on the importance of analyzing disaggregated data on the retention and completion rates for special student populations, in order to "begin to set targets in areas where improvement is needed." In addition, their report recommended that we "continue to monitor and assess…student advising for effectiveness and student satisfaction." More generally, the Team exhorted CSUSM to "create a culture of evidence and demonstrate that it is using that evidence in a 'feedback loop' for improvement of student learning," and urged us to work on moving from a campus culture of "silos" to a more coherent "University first" dynamic. Our summaries of what we learned from research on current practices and their effectiveness include responses to the WASC Team's specific concerns.

The Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) generated many indications of next steps, as well as new research questions for future assessments. Our discussion of each outcome closes with a summary of our challenges and future plans as we move from assessment to action and make systematic plans for continued institutional learning beyond the EER.

Outcome 1: Upward Movement in the One-Year Continuation Rate for First-Time Freshmen

Background

From the Fall 1995 arrival of its first class of freshmen through Fall 2005, Cal State San Marcos's retention tracking remained relatively constant in terms of cohorts analyzed and retention reports produced. We tracked retention rates for first-time freshman students from their fall term of entry to the subsequent fall term one year later. The process examined all regularly admitted students as a group, as well as in specific sub-group breakdowns by ethnicity, gender, and college. A comparison of ethnic minority students versus White students was, and continues to be, a key quality indicator for the University. Our retention tracking closely followed retention reporting requirements prepared by the California State University (CSU) system's Chancellor's Office and was adequate for a smaller university. It was apparent, however, that the University needed a more meaningful retention analysis, since we knew the retention rates, but were less certain of their contexts.

As the University grew, we began to track retention in a more focused way by disaggregating first-year students so that we could follow the relationship between specific elements of the first-year experience and retention rates that seemed to be higher than the overall rates for University freshmen. Ultimately, we wanted to identify and implement successful cohort practices across the entire freshman class. In keeping with these goals, in 2005, Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA) developed a system that allowed us to merge any student group or cohort into the retention calculation process, using student identification numbers. This was the first time the University systematically examined student cohorts other than the traditional retention breakdowns by gender, ethnicity, and college.

An early success in this process was our analysis of the first-time freshmen cohort that took GEL 101, a comprehensive college success course taken by 80 percent of our freshmen. Many faculty and administrators suspected that the first-time freshmen who took GEL 101 fared somewhat better in their first college year, an inference supported by national studies of best practices in education of first-year students. The University offered more sections of GEL 101 and raised the course's profile by moving budget support from the College of Arts and Sciences into a newly created department of First-Year Programs (FYP) in AY0607. Analyses of disaggregated retention data confirmed GEL's impact: a one-year retention comparison of students who took GEL 101 to those who did not showed exactly how much better they did than their peers who did not take the course. CSUSM now had evidence of a significant factor in first-time freshman retention rates. Based on the evidence, the University continued to offer more sections of GEL 101 and strongly encouraged students to take the course in their first term.

By supporting the success of students who reflect the full diversity of our community and region, we sustain and expand the cultural and intellectual richness of our campus community.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

During their March 2007 visit, the WASC CPR Team responded positively to the GEL 101 first-time freshmen retention results and recommended that CSUSM study other groups of first-time freshman students in the same way. We have since performed a host of analyses of many important first-time freshman cohort groups, including:

- San Marcos Experience Program (SME) participants
- University Village Apartments (UVA) residents
- Summer program cohorts (CAMP, Summer Bridge)
- Student athletes, and
- Writing Center users

In addition, we have studied the relationship between retention and key courses required for remediation . The findings have been illuminating, showing, for example, that the mathematics part of the remediation process has the single most significant attrition effect on the first-year freshman retention rate. Based on this information, we increased our efforts to inform freshman students about mathematics remediation requirements, engage them in remediation more quickly, and support them as they navigate the remediation process and/or seek extra help.

As Outcome Six elaborates, we have continued to analyze the relationship between GEL and retention, further disaggregating GEL students to discover the relative impact on subsets of that group and also investigating the impact of GEL timing on retention.

This data-driven investigation of retention patterns allows us to study disaggregated retention rates and to identify what courses have the greatest impact on first-year freshman continuation rates. Our deeper assessment of this outcome gives us the evidence we need to develop a purposeful and systematic approach to one of our highest priorities.

Challenges and Next Steps

We are making progress by analyzing disaggregated freshman cohorts, examining the remediation process effect, and setting first-time freshman student retention goals. However, we continue to ask deeper questions about the challenge of retention. For example, we are now using the National Student Clearinghouse to examine which schools our non-returning freshmen attend. Recent results show that most of the non-returning freshmen who do not complete remediation requirements attend local community colleges. We need to explore how we can use this information to hypothesize and research deeper questions about what those schools may have offered students that CSUSM did not. Each element of the three-part process--examining what factors help first-year students stay in school, aiding them in navigating the remediation process, and investigating which institutions non-returning first-time freshmen attend after ours--moves us closer to increased retention rates.

Another major next step will be measuring the impact of co-curricular activities on first-year students' continuation, academic success, and retention/graduation rates. Co-curricular programs generated by Student Life and Leadership (SLL) have included Orientation Programming, Welcome Week activities, Monday Night Dinners, and the Tukwut Leadership Circle. Welcome Week programming has expanded to include a variety of events supporting new student transition, including the newly developed Academic Resource Fair. This event specifically highlighted programs and success centers available to support students in their academic transition to the university. In addition, SLL has expanded the number of opportunities for campus engagement by increasing the number of student organizations and fraternity/sorority chapters. We have begun to compare continuation and retention rates of first-year students who participate in these opportunities to those who are not engaged in co-curricular programs. SLL continues to revise co-curricular initiatives based on evidence of their success.

Outcome 2: A Significant Improvement in the Percentage of Students who Become Successfully Remediated in Mathematics and/or English Within One Year of Entry

Cal State San Marcos's responsibilities and challenges in the area of remediation led us to include it as a focus for our Institutional Proposal. Many students enter with below college-level skills in mathematics and English. CSU campuses take on the responsibility to fully remediate them as they begin their college careers. From AY0006, however, CSUSM ranked in the bottom five of the 23 campuses in the CSU system in remediation rates, a factor with direct consequences on one-year continuation rates. As a factor influencing retention, remediation is one of our key outcomes.

Background

CSUSM experienced a steady increase in its first-year student population from 2000-07. In the last two years, we have experienced a near doubling of freshman. The number of first-year students needing remediation, as indicated by required testing, has grown proportionately with the size of the entering first-year class. During the years 2000-07, on average, 67% of the entering first-year class has been in need of remediation in mathematics and/or English, and we have fully remediated an average of 68% of those students. For example, the most recent class for which we have complete retention and remediation data is the fresh-

man class of Fall 2007. In that group, 34% of the students in that class entered fully proficient, 32% needed remediation in both mathematics and English, and 34% needed remediation in just one of these areas. Of the students who needed remediation, 75% gained full proficiency before Fall 2008.

Studying disaggregated continuation rates gave us crucial information about how to improve retention of first-year students by focusing on remediation, as well as new awareness of our progress in remediating some sectors of the first-year student body. Continuation rates for students who needed remediation in English, mathematics, or both subjects were substantially different from those for students who entered CSUSM fully proficient. Analysis of disaggregated continuation rates showed us how important it was to focus on students who needed remediation and allowed us to recognize our greater degree of success in serving students who entered proficient in English and math.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

We have made good progress in remediation rates overall, as well as in the specific challenge area of communicating with, advising, and registering students with remediation needs. In addition, we have put several new initiatives in place to address manual registration, course articulation, timing/speed of remedial courses, and intensive student support.

One such initiative was the creation of the First-Year Academic Support Coordinator (First-Year ASC) position which was filled in Spring 2007. The First-Year ASC assessed remediation practices and remediation rates for the 2006-07 academic year as a baseline for future efforts.

In AY 2005-06, CSUSM ranked third lowest in remediation rates within the CSU system, with 73% of first-year students who needed remediation fully remediated by their third semester. Because an overwhelming 86% of non-remediated students in that year were associated with mathematics, deep analyses of the remediation process conducted by the First-Year ASC have primarily focused on mathematics remediation.

An important finding from that analysis was students with a longer remediation path are less likely to complete the journey to full proficiency. The respective failure rates of students whose first course in Fall 2006 was pre-algebra, beginning algebra, and intermediate algebra were 68%, 47%, and 25%. Students' probability of eventual success is the product of the probabilities of success in the individual courses *and* the probabilities of taking the successive courses at the right time. We found through a 2004 study of incoming freshmen that the second issue—taking courses at the right time—was a key area for us to improving our effectiveness.

We implemented changes directed at increasing students' awareness of key remediation information, focusing our action plan on special groups and programs. During orientation sessions during the Summer 2007 term, we presented entering first-year students in need of mathematics remediation with detailed information on their remediation requirements. Three summer programs--Summer Bridge (for students in SSS and EOP), CAMP, and MAPS--focus on the development of quantitative skills among students needing remediation in mathematics. All three programs use a learning community philosophy and provide the opportunity to advance in the remediation process prior to the beginning of their first official semester. Summer 2007 also marked the launching of Summer Academy, a program open to any incoming first-year student in need of remediation in mathematics or English. Finally, the First-Year ASC communicated with students who were assessed after their orientation date and were found to need remediation in mathematics, informing them of their time constraints for completing the ELM requirement and making them aware of how to proceed.

The initiative to inform students and clarify requirements continued in Fall 2007. Overall, 925 first-year students were identified as needing remediation: 687 in mathematics and 732 in English (the numbers include students who needed remediation in both areas). At the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester, the First-Year ASC acted to raise students' awareness and knowledge of the remediation process and the consequences of not being successfully remediated by the end of their first year of enrollment at Cal State San Marcos, launching intensive, persistent communication campaigns that used mass emails and phone banking as proactive measures to address remediation. Follow-up on enrollment in remedial courses yielded information for another positive intervention: at the start of the Fall 2007 semester, 214 students needing remediation and not assessed at orientation were not enrolled in their proper remedial courses; 115 needed mathematics remediation.

The communications campaign and enrollment follow-up proved highly successful, resulting in the enrollment of all students in need of pre-algebra and beginning algebra, and 84% of students in need of intermediate algebra, in their proper mathematics courses by the end of the second week in the semester.

Students received further information about remediation in GEL 101 classes. Each semester, GEL instructors review general policies of the mathematics proficiency requirement and students are required to develop an academic plan that includes any necessary remedial courses and leads to meeting the Lower-Division General Education Mathematics/ Quantitative Reasoning requirement. This allows students to track their own progress.

In Spring 2008, we focused on institutional practices to register students in their next level of remedial mathematics courses, changing procedures to facilitate a smooth Fall-to-Spring transition for students in the mathematics remediation process. Previously, students were unable to pre-register for the next remedial course in their mathematics sequence

until their official grade for the Fall course had been posted. We explored ways to automate the registration process for remedial mathematics courses; in the interim, to better accommodate students' academic planning needs, we developed a manual procedure that expedited the preregistration process for students seeking to move forward in the remediation sequence. The First-Year ASC monitored these students' grades; those who did not pass the pre-requisite course for their next remedial mathematics course were dropped from the course they registered for, contacted by the ASC, and instructed to re-enroll in the course they failed. These procedural revisions produced noticeable changes. Comparing Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, we saw a reduction from 214 to 45 students who needed remediation and were not registered in the proper remedial courses.

Manual registration and tracking continues to be a challenge. The two lowest-level remedial mathematics courses are provided on the CSUSM campus by Palomar College, a local community college. Students register for these courses at orientation by submitting a form to the Office of Registration and Records, which then notifies Palomar College and manually records the students' enrollment in appropriate remedial mathematics classes.

Collaborative efforts between Registration and Records, the Mathematics Department, Academic Programs, and the First-Year ASC attempt to address these challenges by automating registration and tracking through the new PeopleSoft system. Students who take remedial mathematics courses through Palomar will register for those courses through shadow courses on PeopleSoft at CSUSM.

This change is projected to greatly reduce the manual workload for Registration and Records, as well as providing more accurate records of student progress through the two- and three-course sequences in the mathematics remediation process. It will also provide CSUSM with access to class rosters, allowing easier tracking of the students in mathematics courses offered by Palomar but held on our campus. Academic Programs, Registration and Records and the First-Year ASC have held productive meetings in Fall 2008 with their Palomar counterparts (Science Dean, Mathematics Department, and Registration and Records) to improve our communication processes. These are all major steps towards improving the mathematics remediation process.

Students with very low scores on the math proficiency examination (ELM) face another challenge. The last course, either MATH 051 or MATH 051C, has never been articulated with any courses external to CSUSM, resulting in students having restricted access to the course. Efforts are presently being made to remedy this challenge in two ways: (1) articulation of Math 051/051C with community college courses, and (2) condensing the more basic mathematics courses in the remediation sequence so that, beginning in AY0910, the ELM requirement will be, at most, a two-semester sequence of courses.

The first approach to the specific challenge of articulation within mathematics remediation is addressed through the following action item coming out of our FoE® Learning Dimension: "Consider accepting approved math courses that can be taken at community colleges that can satisfy our remediation requirements." The Provost is convening a group whose charge will include making this investigation.

Another major advance in mathematics remediation is that we are moving from experimenting with Palomar College's Fast Track classes (in which students take Math 15 in the first half of the semester and Math 50 in the second half, both at twice the normal intensity) to embracing them. A pilot experiment compared student performance in "regular speed" Math 15 in Fall 2006 and 2007 with "Fast Track speed" Math 15 in Fall 2007 (the pilot section). Even when disaggregated by student ELM score, there was no difference in student performance in regular and fast-track versions. As a result, effective AY0910, students needing mathematics remediation will either be placed in MATH 051 or 051C (if they only need one semester of remediation), MATP 50 (if they need two semesters of remediation), and a MATP 15/MATP 50 Fast Track pair if they need to complete three remedial courses. These changes reflect our use of directed inquiry and evidence-based analyses to improve educational effectiveness.

We also face the challenge of students who need intense support in mathematics to increase their quantitative skill levels. The First-Year ASC is currently developing a comprehensive plan to consolidate university efforts to provide academic support for students needing mathematics remediation, including a required one-credit supplemental mathematics course at CSUSM that would be attached to remedial mathematics courses. These courses would be peer-facilitated and student-driven. A peer facilitator would gauge class needs and facilitate collaboration among students to bring the entire group forward. A secondary purpose of the course would be to provide a venue for direct communication between student support staff and students engaged in the mathematics remediation process. We plan to implement this initiative in Spring 2009.

The overall results of our assessment and revision of the remediation process have been very positive. At the close of Fall 2007, 40% of all first-year students needing remediation were fully remediated, an 8% increase from the same period in 2006. The most dramatic individual results were in the full remediation rate of students who only needed remediation in mathematics, which jumped from 27% at the end of Fall 2006 to 38% at the same time in 2007. These clearance rates marked an increase from the fall semester in the previous AY. At the close of AY0708, these efforts resulted in an 8% increase, from 67% in AY0607 to 75% full remediation of all AY0708 first-year students needing remediation. Even more important than these improved numbers, however, is what we have learned by researching separate elements of the remediation process and making changes based on evidence.

Challenges and Next Steps

In addition to the initiatives described above, our future plans build on the assumption that it is prudent to examine peer institutions whose first-year classes have a percentage of students needing remediation comparable to ours. The CSU system publishes the rates at which its campuses fully remediate their first-year classes, allowing us to identify four sibling campuses with similar remediation needs among first-time first-year students, but whose full remediation rates are, on average, 83%. CSUSM has taken advantage of CSU-wide initiatives to examine best practices of other CSUs and adopt those that fit the situation of our first-year students in need of remediation. In October 2008, for example, a team of administrators, faculty, and staff from CSUSM participated in a statewide CSU conference on "Proficiency in the First Year" and generated a number of important "Take-Away Points and Questions" to draw on for future improvements.

Outcome 3: More Readily Available Advising Services for Incoming Freshmen and Greater Student Satisfaction with Them

Background

During the Spring 2003 term, the Office of Analytic Studies (the predecessor of IPA) administered a survey of Student Views of Academic Advising Services that gave CSUSM its first survey data that specifically included and described the freshmen advising experience on campus. The survey responses pointed out two areas in which existing procedures might be productively strengthened: (1) insuring that all students have ready access to on-campus advisors, and (2) improving student awareness of and access to relevant information about their academic progress.

A campus-wide reorganization of resources in Summer 2003 shifted advising services, with the exception of College of Business Advisors, from Academic Affairs to Student Affairs, with the goal of embedding and integrating advising services into other student support units to improve all units' effectiveness and coherence. Since the survey identified first-time freshmen as the group experiencing the most difficulty with access to advisors, we included incoming freshmen's access to and satisfaction with advising services as outcomes in our 2005 WASC Proposal. As our research into these outcomes has evolved, its focus has expanded to study not only incoming freshmen, but rather, the entire first-year experience.

Two structural changes within advising services in 2006 further refined the advising process at CSUSM. First, one advisor provided students within majors comprehensive advising services from freshmen through senior years. Second, freshman advising responsibilities of multiple campus units were shifted to academic advisors in the three Undergraduate Advising Services units that are major-based: College of Business Administration majors; School of Nursing majors; and Undergraduate Advising Services/COAS majors. These changes served to centralize advising at CSUSM for the delivery of comprehensive advising services to all students. The changes improved advisor accountability and positioned the advising unit to begin developing campus-wide initiatives that targeted freshmen, such as "intrusive" advising services and interventions for first-year students on probation.

To begin assessing the delivery of advising services within the new organizational structure, an anonymous post-advising session satisfaction survey was developed and conducted over the month of December 2006 to capture a snapshot of student satisfaction. The results show overall satisfaction rated high (3.88 mean on a 4 point scale). However, this survey did not focus specifically on first-year students. In preparation for the 2007 WASC CPR visit, a data collection plan was developed in order to begin to conduct assessments of first-year student access, utilization rates, and satisfaction.

In the CPR visit, the WASC Visiting Team praised the redesign of advising services and encouraged the campus to "continue to monitor and assess its student advising for effectiveness and student satisfaction."

Progress Since the CPR Visit

Beginning in Spring 2007, IPA conducted a series of local surveys to establish baseline data for assessment and identify areas of improvement for freshmen students in the areas of access and satisfaction. This research has already deepened our understanding of first-year students' advising experience. A _____ asked students upon whom they relied for advice, as well as a variety of questions about their experiences with faculty, staff or other advisors. As a follow-up to the 2003 survey of "Student Views of Academic Advising Services," the 2007 survey included some repeat questions, offering a valuable opportunity to measure our progress in serving student advising needs in more effective ways.

The Spring 2007 data suggest that most of the 570 respondents were satisfied with the timeliness of their access to staff advising; 80.2 % said that the elapsed time between making an appointment or walking in to see a staff advisor, and the actual consultation, met their needs. Satisfaction ratings with the Advising Center were also high: most of 710 respondents were satisfied (49.6%) or very satisfied (35.1%) with the academic advice they received from Advising Services staff. In comparison to the 2003 survey, students who responded to the 2007 survey were somewhat more likely than respondents to the 2003 survey to say they were very satisfied with their current advising arrangement (25% vs. 17%), though this represents a range of advice-seeking behaviors including consulting staff, consulting faculty, consulting other students/other sources, and not consulting anyone.

This data helps establish baseline data for all students, but also supports our analysis of the freshman advising experience. Of 814 respondents to the Spring 2007 survey, 34.9% were first-year freshmen, similar to the percentage (36.6%) of first-year freshmen among all students enrolled in CSUSM for Spring semester 2007.

In the Fall 2007 semester, Advising Services conducted an electronic survey to collect data related to student access to advising services. This assessment effort is significant in that it is the first ongoing data collection system implemented independently by Advising Services to effectively collect and monitor student advising perspectives. Of the 447 responses, 96 were from freshmen. The freshmen advising experience data indicated that 95.7% of 95 freshmen respondents agreed that making an appointment using the on-line scheduler was relatively easy to do. In addition, 79.7% agreed that it was easy to find an appointment time that fit their schedule and the same percentage were satisfied with the process of making an appointment. Of 92 freshmen respondents, 80.4% were highly satisfied with their advising session. The advisors received high marks from freshmen for their professionalism, preparedness, knowledge of relevant undergraduate requirements, and ability to create an atmosphere in which students felt comfortable. The data suggest significant progress in access and satisfaction, the two key areas of the freshman advising experience identified as needing improvement.

The Foundations of Excellence® Student Survey administered in Fall semester 2007 to 590 first-year students, provided additional data on the freshmen advising experience. Of 590 respondents, 69.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the academic advising help provided by a staff advisor.

During the Fall 2007 semester, Advising Services requested IPA researchers to compare first-time freshmen students' use of advising services and their retention/ graduation/ continuation rates with retention/graduation/continuation rates for the University as a whole, numbers that include both students who use advising services and those who do not. Data for freshman cohorts in Fall 1999, 2000, and 2001 suggest that freshmen students who utilize advising services are likely to be retained and to graduate at a higher rate when compared to the University's overall six-year retention/graduation rates. The data also show that one-year continuation rates of first-time freshmen students who utilized advising services were consistently higher than overall University continuation rates - 87.9% during Fall 2000-Fall 2006 academic terms versus the University's 68.4% continuation rate.

Challenges and Next Steps

Despite clear improvements since 2003, first-year students' access to advising services from their arrival and throughout their freshman year continues to be a challenge. The Web Scheduler system, which tracks students who schedule a 30-minute advising appointment, shows that of 1386 incoming first-time freshmen, only 486 (35%) attended at least one advising session in Fall 2006. This data does not, however, include walk-in visits, or phone/email contact with Undergraduate Academic Advising.

Spring 2007 data on freshmen students' patterns of seeking academic advice suggests additional layers of the challenge of advising first-year students. Of 103 freshmen respondents, 22.3% said they relied upon staff for academic advice, vs. 31.1% who reported that they relied on faculty, 18.4% who relied upon another student, and 22.3% who relied on "no one."

The open-ended comments section of the 2007 survey, while not sorted to identify freshman responses, suggests that access, in terms of availability of appointments, advisor-student ratios, and advising hours that meet scheduling needs of commuter and evening students, may be a factor in first-year students' advice-seeking behavior. Increasing access to advising staff is a challenge in context of a difficult state budget situation. One approach might be to inventory, and make strategic use of, existing strategies for supplementing the work of the Advising Center, such as personal academic planning activities institutionalized in the GEL 101 class, as well as the new interactive on-line academic planning tool, Lower-Division Academic Roadmaps (LDRs).

Undergraduate Advising Services plans to continue developing a broad base of service indicator data collection points as a way to monitor and improve freshmen access to advising and satisfaction with services. For example, in the Fall 2007 semester, CI Track data collection software was installed in the Undergraduate Advising receptionist's office to provide easy and accurate advising services utilization data by major and level. Training for generating reports from the database took place in Spring 2008.

...freshmen students who utilize advising services are likely to be retained and to graduate at a higher rate when compared to the University's overall six-year retention/graduation rates.

In closing, we note that a previous challenge identified in the 2007 CAS review of advising services still remains, in that within the current organizational structure, CoBA Advising and Nursing advisors are not housed under UAS. For its part, CoBA has developed a coherent and effective advising system in which all first year students who want to pursue a Business major are classified as pre-business. CoBA advising staff participate in special orientations and begin advising these students once they are admitted. This means that students have one point of contact for their advising throughout their academic career and the opportunity to develop relationships with the advising staff that may prove helpful as they pursue their degrees.

The Nursing Advisors offer regularly scheduled Nursing Information Sessions on campus each month for prospective students. First-year students interested in taking the Pre-Nursing Core required for entry into any of the University's Nursing programs have the opportunity to participate in specialized break-out sessions at Orientation. The Nursing Advisors are available year-round to answer questions and offer guidance to current students. A School of Nursing FAQ link leads first-year students directly to the specific information they will need to have the potential to apply to any of the Nursing programs, as well as important information on the current status (i.e. impaction) of programs.

Even though CoBA and Nursing are administratively separate from UAS, there are many opportunities for sharing both challenges and best practices. To fully integrate and coordinate undergraduate advising services, the three units fully participate in retreats, weekly staff meetings and special planning events to ensure continuity of services and processes. As the CAS report noted, "UAS has done a good job of strengthening ties" with CoBA and Nursing advisors, and CSUSM has the potential to use such ties in First-Year advising to develop "a strong hybrid organization that links diverse organizational areas as the University grows in academic structure."

Outcome 4: An Increase in the Percentage of Minority Students among the First-time Freshmen Returning for a Second Year of Study

Background:

Student diversity at CSUSM has steadily increased since the University first opened its doors in 1990. Whereas the proportion of minority students[1] totaled 14.9% in 1990, it stood at 37.3% for Fall 2007. If we focus only on first-time freshmen for Fall 2007, 42% are minority students. It should be noted that 10% of the students are in the other/unknown category, so the 37.3% may understate the actual number of minority students. This significant population within our first-year student body is at particular risk for non-retention. As early as fall 2001, university officials observed a disparity between white and minority students with respect to one-year continuation rates for first-time freshman. White students reported a 65% continuation rate, but minority students reported a significantly lower rate, 57%. Based on the trajectory of minority student representation, any disparity of academic progress could easily be magnified unless addressed. On the positive side, concerted efforts resulted in a reduction of this gap for the last year of reporting: Fall 2007 to Fall 2008 white student retention was 71.3% vs. minority retention of 69.7%.

The 2006 WASC Report established that CSUSM believed in "fostering diversity and improving retention rates for first year students by fostering access and retention." While remediation issues, the focus of Outcome 2, are one factor in non-retention of minority students, the focus of the Outcome 4 inquiry was to explore the various factors affecting minority persistence and attrition, and particularly those factors that extended beyond academics. A companion focus was to apply the information and insight gained in the Outcome 4 inquiry in fulfilling the Educational Equity and Diversity goal by working towards Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status

Progress Since the CPR Visit

In AY0708, the committee studying this outcome focused the research on identifying factors that contributed to the attrition rates of minority students. Building on the established seven outcomes, the committee deemed it important to further refine the focus as a means to better understand the experience of first-year minority students and concluded that direct report from students was necessary to understand their experiences. Consequently, the committee crafted this statement of focus: "To measure the perception and attitudes of first year minority freshman students and what they consider as factors in their persistence and attrition."

While CSUSM has made strides in addressing the issue of remediation there was anecdotal evidence that suggested students left CSUSM for other reasons. Staff from across campus working with minority students offered their perspective of what those reasons might be for first year minority freshmen. Among the staff indentified challenges were the lack of student financial aid, competing family responsibilities, commuting limitations, lack of parental knowledge about the higher education process, feelings of isolation, and language barriers. The committee deemed it important to research those observed factors by surveying first-year minority freshman students in late fall or early spring semester to capture the greatest number of respondents before they made the decision to either return or leave the university after their first year. Accordingly, the committee designed a survey to

1 Minority students consist of those who have identified themselves from one of the following ethnic groups: African American, Asian, Filipino & Pacific Islander, Latino, and Native American.

assess student attitudes, perceptions, and experiences related to campus climate; racial/ethnic identity; campus involvement; and other areas affecting minority student retention and attrition, preparing it to be sent to first-year students in February 2007, with a planned follow-up of individual interviews with 20 students.

Unfortunately, the committee experienced several delays and frustrations in bringing the survey and interviews to fruition. We describe these more fully under "Challenges," but given that we derived important refinements to our research process from the challenges of a survey that did not measure what we intended it to measure, it is important to consider our unsuccessful survey effort as one more example of our progress as a learning institution in the time since the CPR visit.

On more positive note, the HSI Task Force was turned into a smaller Implementation Team workgroup during the summer of 2007. The continued charge of the implementation team is to identify strategies to accelerate our campus progress toward attaining federal designation as an HSI. To be eligible for HSI status, undergraduate full-time equivalent student (FTES) enrollment must be at least 25% Hispanic. Students must also meet certain income requirements. The task force has undertaken efforts to achieve HSI eligibility and greater student diversity that is representative of the region. Our undergraduate Hispanic FTES has increased gradually from 18.6% in fall 2000 to 24.4% in Fall 2008. We are closer to achieving the important outcome of becoming an official HSI.

Challenges and Next Steps

The first challenge in administering the survey occurred mid way through the research phase when a new University policy required the approval of a new University-Wide Survey Committee, as a means to guide campus survey deployment and minimize redundancy of surveys. In consultation with IPA, the committee designed a plan of action for the survey administration along with timelines. Although the University-Wide Survey Committee initially approved release of the survey, they later placed the survey on hold for further revisions and shifted to a previously released ACT survey as a means to collect information about minority student retention.

This presented a second challenge--the use of a survey instrument not designed to get at minority student retention issues. The ACT survey questions posed limitations and did not address the areas of inquiry the committee wanted to pursue. The committee felt it important, for example, to understand not only those factors that cause students to rethink their decision to pursue their education and leave, but to also learn about those factors that contribute to a minority student's decision to persist, notwithstanding the challenges they may face. The hope was to identify activities, program services and support mechanisms that might be replicated and supported at an institutional level. However, to avoid creating "survey fatigue"– that is, requiring too much time and attention on the part of the responder - in the context of the ACT survey, the committee limited itself to three additional questions tailored to the experience of students at CSUSM.

Another survey challenge was a low student response rate. IPA sent the ACT survey twice over a period of two months, and ultimately, the response rate was too small to conduct significant data analysis. IPA identified 759 students meeting the criteria of the inquiry (i.e. all first-time freshmen who enrolled at CSUSM in fall 2006 or later and did not return in any subsequent term), with only 101 responses, of which only 33.7% were from a minority group. The committee determined that the response rate was too low to draw any meaningful conclusions from the results.

The final challenge for the committee was the inability to answer a myriad of questions about the survey process in the context of organizational structures and resources. Which office would be responsible for converting any data results into a meaningful action plan? How would CSUSM determine successful retention strategies? Which administrator would be responsible for monitoring, implementing and coordinating any institutional efforts to address the persistence and attrition of minority students?

Based on the challenges of the survey, the committee proposed adopting the statement of focus declared earlier in this essay as the objective to guide its next steps: *To measure the perceptions and attitudes of minority students and what they consider as factors in their persistence and attrition.*

The committee has developed a six step action plan for an ongoing survey to be administered to students in a timely manner; establishing a broad based work group to develop a strategic plan in response to minority student retention/attrition data; and other activities designed to increase minority student retention.

In sum, while we had hoped by this time to be working with useful evidence to make changes that may increase retention of minority students, we have nonetheless made some important strides that will allow us to ask the questions that will provide that desired evidence in the near future.

Outcome 5: Strengthening Our Campus Learning Assistance Centers

Background

The Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services (CLASS) are a complement of student support programs that enhance retention, graduation, and success of all students, but have an especially significant impact on first-year students. CLASS programs provide students with academic and tutoring support, computer lab facilities, counseling and advising services, and general information for success

at CSUSM. CLASS promotes the idea students learn most effectively, and progress through college curricula more successfully, by supplementing classroom learning with the encouragement and support of staff and peer tutors well versed in the subject matter and sympathetic to the demands of college life.

The Writing Center serves all students, from entry level to graduate level, looking for help and feedback on all stages of the writing process. The Math Lab invites students seeking assistance in lower division and pre-baccalaureate courses in mathematics. The Language Learning Center (LLC) serves students who are studying one of the five languages taught on campus (Arabic, French, German, Japanese and Spanish) or working to fulfill the Language Other Than English Requirement (LOTER). Student Support Services (SSS), the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), and ACE Scholars provide academic advising, personal counseling, and supplemental instruction to low-income, first-generation college students.

We began formally assessing and refining the centers' activities supporting student success in 2006. For example, in Spring 2006, the Writing Center used an online questionnaire to gather ideas and insight from faculty about our students' writing needs and our services. The responses revealed three central themes, a need for:

- More availability for students across campus;
- Broader writing support for students outside of General Education Writing (GEW);
- More English Language Learner (ELL) and grammar support.

We began to implement a series of changes in Fall 2006 to address needs such as the ones listed above. The Writing Center redesigned its collaborative relationship with GEW and developed a new tutoring model that opened up much needed time and space in the Writing Center to support students from all disciplines. This model, launched in Fall 2006, sent two tutors into the GEW classroom approximately three times a semester to work with students in small groups as they revised their papers. The model has been refined each semester, based on feedback from students, tutors, and instructors; the same assessment and refinement loop continues each semester based on the needs of the students. The Writing Center also launched a series of writing and grammar workshops open to all students.

The learning centers also developed a training program for tutors and consultants and began certifying them each semester through the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA). CRLA provides International Tutor Program Certification (ITPC) to programs at three levels: Regular, Advanced, and Master, paralleling the program's fitness to certify tutors at the same three levels. CLASS directors collaborated on the certification process and on tutor training modules, extending CRLA tutor certification to all the centers and making tutoring excellence a coordinated and systematic effort at Cal State San Marcos. We reached CRLA ITPC Level I (Regular) certification in Summer 2006 and Level II (Advanced) certification in Fall 2006.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

Since the WASC Team Visit in Spring 2007, we have implemented the following new initiatives and overall changes to improve the effectiveness and accessibility of the learning centers:

- Job qualifications were modified and new training processes were created in order to develop a strong and well-rounded team of tutors and consultants from a variety of academic disciplines;
- The Writing Center had been offering writing and grammar workshops covering a variety of student concerns, including ELL issues, since Fall 2006. These workshops were held during University Hour, when no classes meet, making them accessible to all students. In Fall 2007, the Writing Center assessed these workshops and determined that they were too poorly attended to continue. The resources originally allocated for these workshops were redirected to increase availability of one-on-one tutoring hours;
- Despite the decision to discontinue the Writing Center workshops, conversations continued between the directors of the Writing Center and LLC about the need to develop university-level writing skills for students who speak multiple languages. In 2007-08, the LLC created and hosted a pilot program of University Writing for Multiple-Language Students Seminars, funded by an Academic Senate Lottery Grant. All first-year students and instructors of first-year courses were also specifically targeted in announcements about the seminars. The LLC conducted additional outreach to students who had not passed the EPT, collaborating with the advisors of CAMP, EOP, and SSS, as well as the First-Year ASC. This vigorous outreach effort also included visits by the LLC director to GEL courses not only to discuss the seminars and other LLC services, but also to educate students about the LOTER. Thirty-four students attended the seminars in 2007-08. Fifty percent of those students completed all weeks—an excellent ratio, given that the seminars required time and effort with no reward of credit or grade. All participants gave the program high marks in quality assessment surveys, did extremely well on the post-seminar "test," and felt that the seminars directly related to their improved grades on both papers and in classes overall. The LLC successfully applied for Lottery Grant funding to continue the seminars in 2008-09. In the first semester of the seminars (Fall 2007), six of the six (100%) students who needed English only remediation were successfully remediated. Four of the five (80%)

who needed both mathematics and English remediation were successfully remediated. This compares positively to the university-wide remediation rates of 85.3% for English only and 69.8% for mathematics and English;

- The Writing Center temporarily extended its evening hours, implemented an Online Writing Lab (OWL), and began working closely with Summer Bridge and Summer Academy, offering supplemental instruction and writing workshops. The Math Lab also extended its hours of operation, created a follow-up model with student athletes, and began developing an email mathematics tutoring service (emath@csusm.edu). The Math Lab increased its collaboration with multiple campus remediation departments and individual instructors regarding specific first-year remediation needs, and began training and scheduling tutors with such needs in mind. The LLC implemented new software, Sanako Study 1200, to support language teaching, learning, and testing, and revamped the tutoring program to offer more grammar workshops and support for all levels of all languages taught on campus;
- All three centers began giving presentations in GEL classes to prepare first-year students for their college adventure;
- We reached CRLA Level III (Master) certification in Summer 2007. Tutors in all three learning centers are now certified through CRLA. Professional development of tutors now includes inviting Master tutors to be peer mentors to new tutors, to facilitate breakout sessions during tutor training, and to present information on the centers to freshmen GEL students;
- We continue to refine our assessment of the centers' work, not only identifying evidence of a correlation between first-year students' use of the centers and their longer-term success. For example, we compared retention rates over five years. We also explored the factors that shape first-year students' actual usage, so that the changes we are able to make will have a significant impact on educational effectiveness;
- The centers have conducted student satisfaction surveys each year indicating that at least 85% of students report that they feel they received quality tutoring;

With the implementation of CI Track in CLASS, we have been able to track the areas of major resource needs by extracting detailed reports of days and times of highest student usage. Data on number of student visits and total hours of use of each center are recorded, allowing a variety of detailed reports.

Challenges and Next Steps

Since CI Track is connected to our student records system, it will be possible to

- track usage by class level, allowing us to focus on freshmen;
- examine final grades for those who used the facilities versus those who did not;
- cross reference how many students used multiple centers (advising, career counseling, all three learning centers, SSS, and EOP); and
- examine retention rates.

Although the campus has not targeted the learning centers for budget cuts, funding has remained constant during a time of 14% growth in the freshman class. This has posed a challenge for all the centers. In AY0809, budget allocations were shifted from the LLC and the Writing Center to support the expansion of services in the Math Lab due to levels of student demand. Future plans for the Math Lab include seeking a larger space and adding additional services for athletes and other special groups.

For their part, the Writing Center and LLC are working with faculty and students to sustain services during a time of continued first-year growth. The Writing Center is developing plans to increase support and resources for faculty teaching writing across the curriculum, and the LLC is seeking to diversify modes of tutoring to include group sessions, study sessions and in-class tutoring, while both are operating with few open hours and reduced services.

While campus growth and state budget fluctuations are a consistent pressure on the learning centers, analysis of our faculty feedback, student satisfaction surveys, and descriptive data confirm the value of allocating resources to the centers and also gives us information about how to improve their functioning even in difficult budgetary times. Our Educational Effectiveness Review and additional internal studies show that these innovative approaches provide first-year students with multiple opportunities to understand course content and successfully navigate through both their courses and the university's remediation and general requirements. CLASS continues to explore alternative approaches to improve student outcomes and ensure that our students receive the math, writing, and language support that they need during their first year of college and beyond.

Outcome 6: Improved Academic Performance and Retention of Freshmen Participating in an Intensive Summer Program and/or a Learning Community.

As the previous sections demonstrate, the success of the freshman population remains a topic of considerable concern for us. Building on the large body of research demonstrating that first-year college success courses, summer programs for incoming freshmen, and learning communities can significantly increase retention rates and overall student success, our Office of First-Year Programs (FYP) has initiated strong collaborations to develop programs to support our freshmen. This includes the continued development of GEL 101; a newly launched intensive summer program (Summer Academy); and the creation of new learning communities. The evidence summarized below reflects our progress in the early stages of a successful unified, cross-division response to the needs of our freshman population.

Background

The CSUSM First-Year College Success Course: GEL 101

Launched in 1995, GEL 101 is a comprehensive first-year college success course modeled after the nationally recognized UNIV 101 course at the University of South Carolina. GEL 101 fulfills the lower-division Area E general education requirement in lifelong learning and information literacy. The course is specifically designed to assist freshmen students with all aspects of the transition to the world of higher education. In addition to supporting development of academic skills, information literacy, and career planning, the course includes strong links with Student Affairs and associated development of co-curricular life. IPA has provided us with data going back to 2000 demonstrating that students who complete GEL 101 have significantly greater continuation rates. This is particularly true for our first-year students in need of mathematics and/or English remediation. Originally a stand-alone course administered by the College of Arts and Sciences, GEL 101 is now administered and delivered by the Office of First-Year Programs.

Intensive Summer Programs for Incoming Freshmen

As we noted in our 2005 WASC proposal, CSUSM has for years provided several summer programs designed for incoming first-time freshmen. SSS and EOP have jointly sponsored the Summer Bridge Program that provides incoming students in several state and federally-supported programs with an intensive five-week program focusing on writing, mathematics, and general college success skills. Beginning in Summer 2009, SSS and EOP will offer two different summer programs. The SSS program will be much shorter and have a different focus than the EOP program, allowing response to the needs of students in a differentiated manner. CAMP offers a similar summer program for students from migrant and seasonal worker families. Both the Summer Bridge Program and CAMP include GEL 101. In addition, since 2004, FYP has offered an intensive six-week mathematics remediation program, *Mathematics Acceleration Program in the Summer* (MAPS), for students who did not pass the CSU Entry Level Mathematics (ELM) requirement. MAPS combines an innovative Web-based mathematics instruction tool, ALEKS, with highly customized one-on-one and small group instruction. At the end of MAPS, students retake the ELM exam and receive customized advising to ensure proper placement in a Fall mathematics course.

Although Summer Bridge, CAMP, and MAPS have been successful programs, collectively they serve a very limited number of students. With this in mind, FYP made a commitment to increase the number of incoming freshmen who can take advantage of a comprehensive pre-Fall summer learning community. During AY0506, FYP supported a small group of faculty and administrative staff to develop several new GEL courses to be part of a new learning community called *Summer Academy*. GEL 120, *Reading and Writing for College Success*, is a 4-unit course designed for incoming students who did not meet the CSU English Proficiency Test (EPT) requirement. The course integrates the standard GEL 101 college success curriculum with intensive writing-across-the-curriculum instruction. GEL 110, *Quantitative Skills and College Success*, is a 3-unit course designed for incoming students who did not meet the ELM Requirement. The course integrates the standard GEL 101 college success curriculum with an emphasis on supporting the development of quantitative skills necessary for successful completion of the lower-division curriculum in mathematics. Enrollment in GEL 110 requires concurrent enrollment in a MAPS-based mathematics laboratory course, GEL 010.

Learning Communities

The success of the learning community model, cohorts of students enrolled in linked courses with a common theme and array of co-curricular activities, has been well documented. For AY0405, FYP collaborated with University Village Apartments (UVA), our on-campus residential facilities, to offer a pilot version of our first living-learning community, *the San Marcos Experience or SME,* for 36 first-year students living on campus. In Fall 2004, the San Marcos Experience learning community linked together GEL 101, a freshman writing course (GEW 101), and a basic political science course (PSCI 100) around the theme of civic engagement. In spring 2005, SME students were enrolled in an oral communication course and an interdisciplinary social science course. Initial feedback was highly constructive and a decision was made to formally launch the *San Marcos Experience Living-Learning Community* in AY0506. At that time, FYP made a commitment to expand the SME model to students not in UVA by continually adding new learning communities focus-

ing on different themes and different student populations. We detail some of these initiatives below.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

GEL

FYP has expanded the GEL program in innovative ways by creating new GEL courses for the intensive Summer Academy program, linking GEL 101 with other courses to form comprehensive learning communities, and developing specialized GEL 101 sections designed to meet the needs of specific student populations (e.g. team athletes). In Fall 2007, FYP collaborated with Athletics to begin offering specialized sections of GEL 101 reserved for our freshmen athletes. The course is taught by our Athletics Coordinator and focuses on the academic and co-curricular needs of student athletes. The Athletics Department and our student athletes report a high level of satisfaction with this model and, for the foreseeable future, we plan to offer a section of GEL 101 for student athletes every semester.

In addition, we have built on the finding that taking GEL improves retention for first-year students to investigate more precise layers of GEL's impact. For example, while all students who take GEL have a higher retention rate than students who do not, there is a much more profound impact on students who enter needing English and/or mathematics remediation. Among students entering in Fall 2007, for example, the continuation rate was 71.9% for all freshman students who took GEL, compared to 61.9% for those who did not take the course. The disaggregated data, however, allows us to see the gap between the 74.4% continuation rate of GEL students needing English remediation only and the 57.7% rate of non-GEL students needing English remediation, and—even more dramatically—a difference of 20 percentage points between the continuation rate (74.1%) of GEL students who entered needing mathematics remediation and the rate (54.1%) of non-GEL students entering with the same remediation need.

A recent finding also suggests that taking GEL early in one's college career may have a positive impact on retention.

Summer Academy

After obtaining curriculum approval for GEL 120, 110, and 010, FYP collaborated with Extended Learning to launch Summer Academy in Summer 2007. The collaboration with Extended Learning allowed us to run the Academy as self-supported courses, while minimizing the cost to students. The first cohort of Summer Academy students included 13 students enrolled in GEL 120 and 19 students enrolled GEL 110/GEL 010. In addition to taking these Summer Academy courses, students participated in a number of co-curricular activities designed to increase familiarity with the campus community and university services. Student course evaluations indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program. A highlight of the first Summer Academy was the Roundtable Lunch program, which allowed the students to meet and socialize with a number of our senior-level faculty.

The Summer Academy Program ensured that each of its students was enrolled in the correct Fall mathematics and writing courses. This cohort of students has completed their first Fall semester. IPA has tracked their progress, and preliminary results are very positive (e.g. 12 of the 19 GEL 110 students were able to clear the Entry Level Mathematics requirement by the end of their first Fall semester. We increased the number of students who were able to participate in Summer Academy in Summer 2008, offering one section each of GEL 110, GEL 010, and GEL 120 to a total of 56 students.

San Marcos Experience (SME)

The SME living-learning community continues to link GEL 101 with key general education courses and co-curricular activities focusing on the theme of civic engagement. Highlights of the program include an annual "Debate the Election Issues" in Fall, and annual participation in a local neighborhood revitalization project in the nearby city of Vista, "VISTANS Revitalize Our Community." The third SME cohort has completed its first Fall semester, and plans are underway for an expanded AY0809 SME cohort of up to 100 students. IPA has plans to track all SME students' progress. Initial reports indicate high one-year continuation rates among SME students (80% and 79.1%, respectively, for the 2005-06 and 2006-07 cohorts). Not only is student feedback highly positive, but also many "SME graduates" have gone on to give back to the campus, assuming key leadership roles in residential and campus life organizations (e.g. resident advisors and Orientation Team).

New Learning Communities

In Fall 2007, FYP collaborated with the CoBA to launch our first discipline-specific learning community. Offered to 30 first-time freshmen declared "pre-business," the First-Year Business Learning Community (FYBLC) linked the GEL 101 course with a business law course, BUS 202, a key course in the lower-division pre-business curriculum. The content of the GEL 101 course was customized to focus on academic planning and success in the pre-business curriculum; careers in business; and researching local North County businesses. The FYBLC students received highly "intrusive" academic advising, in which advisors visited the students and worked to ensure that all saw an advisor in the first semester. Further, the College Dean and Associate Dean visited the group to give them an overview of business education. Co-curricular activities for the FYBLC included a Roundtable Lunch where students met and networked with the CEOs of our local North County Chambers of Commerce. For Fall 2008, the program expanded to two cohorts, serving a total

of 65 pre-business students. IPA has plans in place to track FYBLC students' progress.

Challenges and Next Steps

Key challenges for our GEL program include maintaining relatively low class size while offering enough sections to meet student needs, as well as increasing professional development opportunities for our GEL instructors. We have developed a set of student learning outcomes for our GEL program that go beyond retention. We have reached, however, a pivotal point in GEL at which we are scrutinizing these outcomes to make sure that they are well-aligned, not only with course content but also with our goals for the course. Using feedback from the FoE initiative, we are reexamining the role and function of GEL in the first-year experience by asking foundational questions; for example, what do we want students to learn and be able to do as a result of this course? Are they learning what we want them to learn in GEL?

For Summer Academy, the major challenges will be to maintain the program at an affordable cost to students and to coordinate student recruitment, enrollment, and advising procedures with other learning community programs.

With the success of our current GEL program, and associated summer programs and learning communities, FYP has experienced a number of requests to build new learning communities and specialized GEL sections. For AY0809, FYP plans to add a number of new specialized GEL sections that may lead to the development of additional comprehensive learning communities. These new specialized GEL sections include a section for commuter students with a "leadership" theme; a section for students who participated in the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program in high school; and two sections for EOP and SSS students who did not participate in Summer Bridge.

It is important to note that our Fall learning communities and specialized sections do not currently involve any extra costs to students, a key factor in making these programs sustainable. Our key current challenge is to develop effective recruiting, registration, and advising procedures for the various offerings. We are already taking action to meet this challenge. For example, FYP collaborated with CoBA to develop more effective recruitment methods for the FYBLC, including a co-written pamphlet for this purpose. This Fall, more students were interested in the FYBLC than we had room for in the program, suggesting that recruitment efforts have been success.

In the area of registration, FYP is working with Enrollment Management Services to explore block registration for students in FYBLC, allowing them to use a registration package to enroll in both BUS 202 and GEL 101.

Finally, FYP has collaborated with CoBA advisors to offer interactive advising presentations for students in the FYBLC. These sessions, offered in a roundtable lunch format, gave students greater access to advising and potentially a richer advising experience, given the presence of other students and the chance to listen to other questions and answers.

Outcome 7: Development of a Campus-Wide "Action Plan for First-Year Improvement" Based on the Comprehensive Foundations of Excellence® Process in 2007-08

Background

As the earlier sections of this essay elaborate, CSUSM offers a wide range of programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the success of our freshman population. Although these various examples represent considerable collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, our efforts have been relatively decentralized and we have not yet developed a full-blown campus-wide framework, vision, and assessment process for the freshman year.

With the success of our current GEL program, and associated summer programs and learning communities, FYP has experienced a number of requests to build new learning communities and specialized GEL sections.

With this challenge in mind, the Office of First Year Programs sought and received funding for our campus to apply to participate in the Foundations of Excellence® (FoE®) in the First College Year, a project developed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College. Participation in this project allowed our campus to conduct a comprehensive year-long self-study and improvement planning process to enhance our programs and services for first-year students. Our proposal to the Policy Center was successful, making our campus one of 13 four-year institutions participating in the 2007-2008 National Select Cohort for Foundations of Excellence®.

Progress Since the CPR Visit

To begin our FoE® project, in August 2007 we sent a campus team of administrators, student affairs professionals and faculty to a two-day intensive training session with the Policy

Center, where we learned how to implement the project on our campus. Our campus began our comprehensive self-study in Fall semester 2007, using the Policy Center's aspirational model to guide us through an internal inventory of all programs, policies, and practices relevant to the first year of college. The model consists of nine Dimensions representing key aspects of the first year of college. We now have 95 people serving on a FoE® Task Force, a group that includes representatives from the administration, faculty, student affairs, and the student body.

At the close of 2008, all nine Dimension Committees have now submitted their reports to the Policy Center and have received positive and constructive feedback. The FoE® Steering Committee is already at work on a final report that incorporates this feedback to make detailed recommendations for improving the first year of college at Cal State San Marcos. We are proud to note that student feedback (derived from a focus group) is part of five of the nine reports.

In terms of this outcome, we have made significant progress. Each Dimension report includes a list of action items ranging from near-term to longer-term and including both relatively easy-to-accomplish and more challenging tasks. Our combined Action Plan comprises 146 recommended action items, 13 of which were already underway in November 2008 when members of the Task Force presented their progress during a Town Hall meeting.

Challenges and Next Steps

The FoE® model emphasizes that student success is much more than retention. Our Action Plan's number and range of practical, creative, and visionary action items for improving first-year students' experience affirms that emphasis. Given the reality of campus budget cuts, there will be difficult choices regarding the prioritization and implementation of the recommended action items. Our FoE® process and the cross-campus conversations it has catalyzed, however, have been highly productive, both in the specific outcome of generating an action plan and in the broader effect of creating capacity for future dialogue involving a diverse range of campus groups. From our decision to apply to FoE® through our work on the self-study in AY0708, this initiative has exemplified our active commitment to a more coherent "University First" model of educational effectiveness.

Conclusion

Since the 2007 CPR visit, we have made significant progress in our evolution from a culture of "fixing problems" to a broader culture of inquiry into our successes and failures as a learning institution. Our research has generated a more pervasive and coherent commitment to using evidence for continuous improvement of student learning. While not all of our initiatives have had the desired results at the time of this report, all have been successful as an index of our progress as a learning organization. Significantly, we have developed stronger feedback loops to recognize and share a rich array of evidence about best practices and problem areas. We have already expanded and systematized our ways of recognizing, refining, and building on a shared culture of the first-year experience. Further, we have become more aware of the interconnections among the multiple campus subcultures (classroom, learning center, residence hall, co-curricular groups) that shape and are shaped by our first-year students. We can mobilize them more purposefully to support student success, working from a "University First" orientation rather than in silos.

Our research has generated a more pervasive and coherent commitment to using evidence for continuous improvement of student learning.

Our focus on the specific outcomes described in this essay led us to deep reflection on the first year at CSUSM as a lens on our overall educational effectiveness as a university. We attended to what can go wrong for first-year students, but also to what often goes right for them on our campus. The first year of college is a formative period in which an institution transmits a culture of higher education, as well as its own mission and values, to new students. One of the outcomes of all the work described in this essay has been progress in our development of a culture of the first year that is both vibrant and coherent, both responsive to external standards and expressive of our local and regional commitments. We are proud of our achievements and excited about our next steps.

5 Into the Future

According to Peter Senge, Director of the Center for Organizational Learning at the MIT Sloan School of Management, learning organizations are:

> **…organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.** [1]

Senge's definition describes the journey CSUSM has experienced—and continues to experience—in preparation for our Educational Effectiveness Review. We have expanded our capacity to create results, adapted our thinking to find new ways of doing our work, re-affirmed our aspirations, and strengthened our university first perspective.

The themes identified in our 2005 Institutional Proposal - academic master planning, student learning outcomes and program improvement, and increasing first year student retention - have provided the University community with the framework to sustain conversations around high value issues. These sustained conversations, in turn, have produced a complement of concrete outcomes with measurable results.

The discussion below confirms that CSU San Marcos has addressed the issues identified in the 2005 Institutional Proposal and noted in the 2007 CPR Team Report and Commission Letter. We have accomplished the following outcomes in each of our three theme areas.

Academic Master Planning

- Created an Academic Affairs Strategic Plan to unify our planning direction.
- Developed the Academic Affairs three year rolling plan process to clearly articulate future program aspirations and resource needs.
- Initiated the University Academic Master Plan Forecasting Committee to expand and energize our academic planning processes.
- Refined the Academic Affairs planning and budget process and timelines to increase an "all unit" perspective and to provide for collaborative conversations between Academic Affairs Leadership Council and the Academic Senate Budget and Long Range Planning Committee.

The combined effect of these actions is an enhanced budget and planning process which promotes transparency, strategic thinking, and use of evidence when allocating resources.

Strengthening Academic Programs Through Assessment of Student Learning

- Appointed a General Education Coordinator (2006);
- Appointed a Faculty Learning Outcomes Assessment Fellow (2008);
- Provided funds for developing program assessment activities;
- Approved the Graduate Studies Writing Assessment Requirement Policy;
- Assessed student writing and information literacy assignments in 19 different courses, using 1800 pieces of student writing, and engaged 50 faculty members in the process;
- Published Student Learning Outcomes for all undergraduate programs in the 2008-2010 catalog;
- Used direct evidence of student learning and progress to reflect on teaching, learning and program improvement within all three Colleges, the School of Nursing, and Student Affairs;
- Implemented an annual plan for assessment activities to be completed by all degree programs.

The combined effect of these outcomes is a culture shift toward the use of assessments in an intentional, systematic manner to inform teaching, curriculum development, and program reviews.

Improving Retention of First-Year Students

- Appointed a First –Year Academic Support Coordinator (2007);
- Investigated the retention patterns of various student groups using disaggregated data and used the data to change practices;
- Increased remediation rates for first-year students by 8%;
- Reduced the gap between white and minority student retention rates from 8 % to 1.6 %;
- Expanded and assessed the impact of summer programs designed to assist first time students in meeting remediation targets and to acclimate to the university experience;
- Completed the Foundations of Excellence self study, involving an internal inventory of all programs, policies, and practices relevant to the first year of college in Fall 08 and developed an action plan of next steps.

The combined effect of these outcomes is an in-depth, cross-unit analysis of first year policies, practices, and data. The First Year Experience inquiry revealed that first time freshman success is a distributed responsibility, residing in multiple divisions, units and positions. This analysis provides the insight and leverage to make changes and use new approaches for addressing the needs of our diverse student population, not only in the first year, but across the four or more years of the undergraduate experience.

Conclusion

The concrete outcomes in all three theme areas coalesce around the goal of student success. Successful academic master planning provides students with viable and vibrant degree programs, representing an array of disciplines. The use of student learning outcomes and assessments to inform teaching and program development promotes continuous improvement in what we teach and how we teach it. The first year experience paves the way for long term student success in pursuing the goal of graduation and degree attainment.

As we have learned, implementing best practices is complex work. The culture of the organization, sensibilities of community members, resource challenges, and technical skills involved in the use of data all require intentional conversations around our collective aspirations and how to achieve them. These conversations must be frequent, meaningful, and purposeful. The conversations and resulting action plans, however, can appear overwhelming, and feeling overwhelmed by the task can halt progress. We have been able to interrupt the feeling of being overwhelmed by taking many incremental but meaningful steps to build momentum and interest in the change process. This effort is both exciting and daunting – exciting because we have seen how collaboration and cooperation among divisions and units can positively impact student success and daunting because progress can seem slow and uneven.

The three-stage accreditation process has set us upon a path of continuous inquiry, reflection and action. The inspiration and stamina needed to continue on the path will come from our commitment to pursuing effective responses to discoveries made during the self-study processes. As we continue conversations and implement action plans, we must take care to respect appropriate roles of individuals and entities, while simultaneously supporting and challenging one other to greater levels of success.

We will continue our work by taking the following next steps:

- Initiating and evaluating our newly aligned and enhanced planning and budget process;
- Building upon the successful "close the loop" assessment experiences in order to expand the effective use of data to inform teaching and program planning;
- Finalizing a program review process informed by attention to student learning outcomes and informing our planning and budgeting process;
- Using the Foundations Of Excellence action plan to pursue excellence in all aspects of the first year experience, the effect of which will be increased student retention, persistence and degree attainment;
- Building upon the collaboration and cooperation between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, manifested during the WASC self study, in order to coordinate efforts, leverage resources and develop strategic approaches to the toughest problems associated with student success. This coordinated approach to promoting student success reflects the notion that "it takes a campus to educate a student."

Our Educational Effectiveness Review report chronicles our forward movement as a learning organization. We have offered concrete evidence of attaining mutually desired results and of changes to our patterns of thinking and doing. Now the process begins again with action, reflection, and commitment.

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1 Senge, P. M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organization*, London: Random House.

6 Appendices

Appendix A

Academic Master Planning Theme Institutional Proposal Questions (Revised)

1. Do the programs on internal campus planning documents (e.g. College Academic Master Plans and the Academic Blueprint) make it onto the University Academic Master Plan which is submitted to the CSU Chancellor's Office for Board of Trustees' approval?
2. Are formal proposals for programs on the approved University Academic Master Plan actually developed, given campus approval, and then approved in subsequent review by the Chancellor's Office and, when required, to CPEC?
3. Which of the programmatic gaps identified at the start of the Academic Blueprint process still remain and is there data that suggest the emergence of new gaps?
4. How do we develop new programs in which we do not already have faculty expertise?
5. What processes are in place or need to be in place to support the initiation of programs for which there is no current campus expertise?
6. How well does enrollment in new programs follow projections in campus planning documents?
7. Were the resources adequate for the 3 year implementation phase of new programs?
8. How do we effectively integrate academic master planning with other campus planning and curricular processes?
9. How do we ensure infrastructure (faculty, library holdings, facilities, etc.) is in place in a timely fashion to support new programs?
10. What is our process for providing resources for planning, development and implementation?
11. What changes have we made in the information that we require to place a proposed program on the University Academic Master Plan?
12. Should each college have a College Academic Master Plan (CAMP)?
13. What should we use to determine the community/regional need for a program?
14. How do we address the needs of existing programs as we plan and implement new programs?
15. Are there additional sources of evidence that we might productively use in determining what programs should be added to our offerings?

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

AA	Academic Affairs
AALC	Academic Leadership Council
AASP	Academic Affairs Strategic Plan
AB	Academic Blueprints
ABC	Academic Blueprint Committee
ACE	ACE Scholarships for Former Foster Youth
ALO	Academic Liaison Officer
ALEKS	On-line math tutorial
APC	Academic Policy Committee
ASC	Academic Support Coordinator
AVID	Advancement Via Individual Determination
AVP	Associate Vice President
BLP	Budget & Long Range Planning Committee – Academic Senate
BUS	Business
CAMP	College Assistance Migrant Program
CAS	Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
CI Track	An educational services tracking system
CLASS	Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services
CoAS	College of Arts & Sciences
CoBA	College of Business Administration
CoE	College of Education
CPEC	California Postsecondary Education Commission
CPR	Capacity and Preparatory Review
CRLA	College Reading & Learning Association
CSU	California State University
CSULB	California State University Long Beach
CSUSM	California State University San Marcos
EER	Educational Effectiveness Review
ELL	English Language Learner
ELM	Entry Level Mathematics
EO	Executive Order (from CSU Chancellor's Office)
EOP	Educational Opportunity Program
EPT	English Placement Test
ETS iSkills	Information and Communication Technology Literacy Assessment
FoE®	Foundations of Excellence®
FTES	Full-Time Equivalent Students
FYBLC	First-Year Business Learning Community
FYP	First-Year Programs
GE	General Education
GEC	General Education Committee
GEW	General Education Writing
GEL	General Education Lifelong Learning
GSC	Graduate Studies Committee
HSI	Hispanic Serving Institution
IPA	Institutional Planning and Analysis
UTPC	International Tutor Program Certification
LDRs	Lower-Division Academic Roadmaps
LEAP	Liberal Education and American Promise
LLC	Language Learning Center

LOTR	Language Other Than English Requirement
LTWR	Literature & Writing
MAPS	Mathematics Acceleration Program in the Summer
NSEE	National Survey on Student Engagement
OBRT	Office of Biomedical Research and Training
OWL	Online Writing Lab
P Form	New Program Proposal Form
PAC	Program Assessment Committee-Academic Senate
PEP	Program Evaluation and Planning
PSCI	Political Science
PSLOs	Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes
RISE	Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement
SLL	Student Life and Leadership
SLOs	Student Learning Outcomes
SME	San Marcos Experience
SSS	Student Support Services
TPA	Teacher Performance Assessment
TPEs	Teacher Performance Expectations
UAMP	University Academic Master Plans
UAPC	University Academic Master Planning Committee
UAS	Undergraduate Advising Services
UBC	University Budget Committee
UCC	University Curriculum Committee-Academic Senate
UMAP	University Master Plan
USP	University Strategic Plan
UVA	University Village Apartments