

*California State University, Stanislaus*

2007/2008

SUPPORT UNIT REVIEW - PHASE 3

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Self-Study and External Review**

**1) Annual reports and self study**

**a) Evaluation process**

The College of Natural Sciences underwent a Support Unit Review during the 2007/2008 year. The External Review Committee completed its report in the spring of 2008.

To conduct the self study, all CNS faculty, administrative and technical staff were given the opportunity to respond to questionnaires and their responses were produced on an aggregate questionnaire summary. Notes were also taken at the CNS Support Staff meetings to record various problems and solutions. The External Review Team conducted its review after a discussion of the self study report with the CNS SUR lead staff and the Dean. In preparing their review, the external review team met with various members of the college and discussed the CNS support unit operations. Each member of the External Review Committee shared their evaluations of the self study review and the personal interviews, which were compiled into a final report.

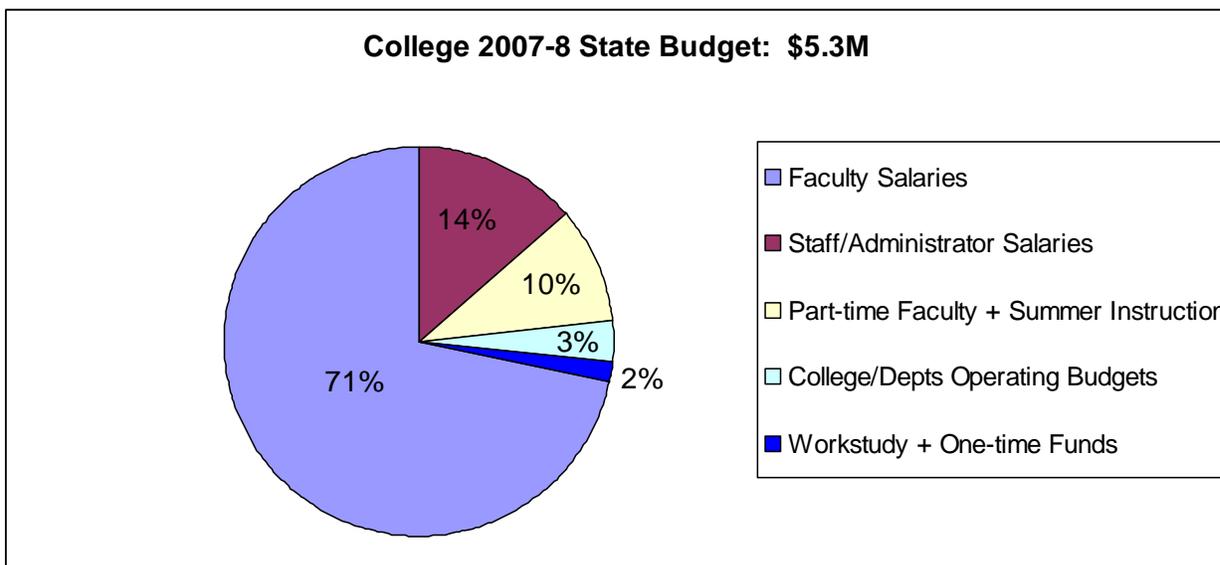
**b) Divergence between self study and review team findings**

- Overall, both the self study review and the external team review found the CNS support unit to be doing an outstanding job in the areas of interaction with faculty, students and other staff. The external team found that the CNS supports the college mission. They also noted that CNS is in its second year of existence, after the break-up of the College of Arts, Letters and Sciences. However, the external review team submitted some recommendations for improvements as follows:
- Addition of staff members to the support unit in areas that are currently operating above capacity. Of particular need are positions in laboratory instructional support and mathematics.
- Addition of floater staff positions that can move between different departments of the College and help in times of heavy work load and/or illness /vacation.
- Development of a process to gain more meaningful student input into the support unit review process.
- We will have conversations between the college and Financial Services to discuss the ordering process with the intent of making that process direct and uncomplicated.
- The college will have a dialogue with the appropriate members of Enrollment Services to improve information access and service to students.

## Mid-year and annual budget reports

### c) Narrative summary

The College of Natural Sciences 2007-8 State Budget was \$5.3M with 85% going to permanent faculty and staff salary lines and 10% to part-time faculty and summer faculty instruction salaries. The College Support Unit staff salaries amounted to 14% of the overall college's state budget allocation.



### d) Assessment of resource allocation and effectiveness

The overarching theme regarding funding was that there are insufficient resources to adequately provide staff, particularly in the area of technical staff. They note that “the decentralization of tasks formerly held by other units across campus to the College level has created increased workload for the College of Natural Sciences Support Unit...” There is an indication that the number of staff have not kept up with the growth of student enrollments, number of courses, number of faculty, and number and complexity of equipment and technologies. In many cases, the number of support staff has not kept pace with similar units on other CSU campuses. Although student assistants have been added to many of the units within the College, it only partially alleviates the pressure which is building on the support staff members.

The overall effect is a reduction of the amount of customer support, particularly face-to-face student support, and a deterioration of morale and job satisfaction among the support staff. The external review committee also noted that the decentralization of tasks and staff overload

have resulted in strained interactions between the College Support Unit and other support units across campus including Financial Services and Enrollment Management.

**e) Adequacy of resources allocated to perform mandated functions**

Other resources such as facilities, equipment, and supplies are adequate for the staff to perform their duties. Although, additional training and workshops are needed as well as funding for staff to attend off-campus workshops when appropriate.

**2) Effectiveness of the unit in supporting the mission of the university**

**a) Mission, goals, and values**

The primary goal of the college is to graduate students with the best education possible. It is also the goal of the CNS faculty and staff to offer the best customer service to our students and the public. Academic excellence is essential to CNS with a constant endeavor to maintain standards. CNS values diversity and is extensively involved in efforts to increase diversity in both faculty and student populations on the college campus and community level.

**b) Processes and assessment**

The CNS administrative staff, faculty and individual departments meet on a regular basis to discuss university policies and processes and areas for improvement. The CNS support unit has regular conversations with the Dean and Department Chairs regarding the effectiveness of these plans and processes.

The CNS support unit does not regularly collect, analyze, or report assessment evaluations of CNS students. The college is in the process of developing assessment tools for the unit. Current processes are evaluations, exit interviews and the year-end accomplishment report.

**Special issues**

The college is highly dependent on equipment and technology worth millions of dollars. There are few or no resources for maintenance and replacement of this equipment. The impact of this situation is that we will have equipment that no longer works or meets current technological standards in a few short years.