

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

INQUIRIES INTO ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING

CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

PREFACE

This self-study document is designed foremost for institutional reflection and educational improvement. Its immediate purpose is to evaluate the extent to which California State University, Stanislaus has fulfilled its “Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity,” defined by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) as demonstrating that the campus “functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures and processes to fulfill its purposes.” The self study, designed around the four WASC standards, provides a holistic perspective of the University’s capacity to achieve its educational aspirations.

In the last self study (1996-98), *Pathways to Learning*, CSU Stanislaus identified directions and actions for continued development as a learning-centered institution. The WASC Commission (1999) endorsed the University’s commitment to “learning-centered” as a core value and drew attention to three areas for continued attention: effectiveness strategies, faculty roles, and the Library. A comprehensive overview of campus actions relating to these three areas identified by the Commission is included as [Appendix X](#), *Response to Previous Commission Concerns*.

As described in the *Institutional Proposal*, CSU Stanislaus maintains a theme-based focus and framework for both the Capacity and Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review. The thematic prism of the current self study – engagement and learning – is a natural sequel to our last self study. Surveys conducted over the past decade indicate that CSU Stanislaus students are highly satisfied with the sense of community they experience on campus. They praise the campus atmosphere, small class size, camaraderie of fellow students, and interaction with their professors. Practices that promote engagement and learning were among the major indicators of success identified by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in its *Graduation Rates Outcomes Study* (2005). In this study, the AASCU placed CSU Stanislaus among twelve state-supported campuses nationwide that demonstrated exceptional performance in retaining and graduating students. The study affirmed a long-held campus perception that student success at CSU Stanislaus results from a campus culture creating a sense of community among teachers and learners. This sense of community is complemented by a shared commitment to student success through strong academic support services and an emphasis on learning and personal development.

This introductory essay describes our community, our people, and our financial and physical capacity, and outlines the organization of the inquiry, the collection and presentation of data/evidence, and the structure of this report.

THE COMMUNITY

Located in Turlock, CSU Stanislaus is in the heart of the Central Valley of California. The University's service region, roughly the size of the state of Vermont, encompasses six counties. Historically rural, increasingly urban, the area contains one of the fastest growing and most diverse populations in the country. College attendance rates in the region have historically been among the lowest in the state. Thus, CSU Stanislaus serves a highly diverse student population that consists of many first-generation and adult reentry students, approximately 30% of whom are Hispanic. CSU Stanislaus is proud to have been named an Hispanic-serving Institution since [date]. In fall 2007, 8,836 students (6,686 FTES) attended CSU Stanislaus, with approximately 80% from the three largest valley counties (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced). Enrollment at CSU Stanislaus has increased by two to six percent per year for more than two decades. In order strategically to increase capacity to manage this continued increase in student enrollment, the University in 2000 bundled several discrete administrative functions into a new entity, Office of Enrollment Management.

The University extends access to students in the Stockton area, 45 miles to the north, by steadily expanding its Stockton presence at a branch campus. The Stockton Center, established in 1974, offers upper-division courses and selected degree programs to transfer and graduate students who reside primarily in San Joaquin County. In fall 2007, headcount enrollment reached 1,110 (433 FTES), approximately 12% of total University enrollment. The University's *Strategic Plan* calls for enhancing the Stockton Center by offering six to eight full degree programs responsive to community needs. On average, about 50% of Stockton students enroll in courses only in Stockton; the other 50% divide their class attendance between the Stockton and Turlock campuses. In addition to the Stockton Center, our distance-learning program extends access to students in the six-county service region through sites at Sonoma and Merced, and provides a limited offering of internet-based courses. The University currently does not offer full degree programs on-line.

For nearly 50 years, CSU Stanislaus has developed academic programs in service to the region. The University offers 40 undergraduate degree programs, 7 post-baccalaureate credential programs, and 23 master's degree programs. At the baccalaureate and graduate levels, new program development since the last review has focused on applied and professional programs, including Agricultural Studies (BA), Art (BFA), Criminal Justice (MA), Ecology and Sustainability (MS), Genetic Counseling (MS/PSM), Music (BM), Nursing (MS), and Social Work (MSW). In addition, the University has developed an interdisciplinary program in Gender Studies (BA), and recently inaugurated a doctoral program in Educational Leadership. As it has grown and matured, the campus community has maintained a dedication to its central mission as a learning-centered institution.

CAPACITY OF OUR PEOPLE

During a period of sustained enrollment growth, faculty and staff at CSU Stanislaus have maintained a commitment to creating a sense of community among faculty, staff, and students. CSU Stanislaus consistently receives high marks from students for the quality of interaction and personal contact with faculty, a characteristic facilitated by a low student-faculty ratio (just under 20 to 1), and a large percentage of full-time faculty (approximately 74% as measured by full-time equivalent faculty).

Since the last self study, full-time equivalent growth has occurred in student (FTES) enrollment by 36.2%, faculty (FTEF) by 31.3%, full-time staff (headcount) by 24.4%, and administration (headcount) by 17.4% (as reported to IPEDS). Turnover in faculty and staff has remained consistently low at CSU Stanislaus, primarily resulting from retirements. Recent transitions in administrative leadership include a new president in 2005-06, a new provost in 2006-07, and a reorganization of the colleges.

While staff increases have not quite kept pace with student enrollment, the University is fortunate to have attained higher professional, educational, and experiential qualifications for our staff, most evident in the growth of the number of technical and professional staff positions. Over the past decade, staff participation in the governance structures of the university has increased substantially. For example, Staff Council provides a formal structure to address staff issues and to showcase staff contributions. Staff members have increased their formal representation on the Academic Senate, the President's Executive Cabinet, the University Budget Advisory Committee (three members), and administrative search committees.

Through various data-gathering mechanisms, staff identified ways in which they personally – and their administrative units collectively – contribute to student learning and student success at CSU Stanislaus. Not surprisingly, many staff described their high work ethic and their focus on improving operations, not merely maintaining *status quo*. At the same time, they expressed concerns about increased workload during a time of higher levels of accountability and constrained budgets. When asked to expand on ways in which the university can improve its staff support, staff responses included redistributing workload and funding across units, making essential personnel permanent, evaluating personnel processes for efficiency and fairness, increased training and support, increased communication, and celebrating staff accomplishments. The University's Strategic Plan includes a priority action related to staff's professional development and growth, with demonstrable effectiveness indicators related to participation rates for staff development, promotions/advancement, educational attainment, and satisfaction. Academic Senate also named this action as a priority item.

Although recent fluctuations in budget have diminished the flexibility of staff and faculty to accommodate continued student growth, the University has the human resource capacity overall to achieve its educational mission.

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

CSU Stanislaus has established fiscal and financial planning processes in accordance with requirements of the CSU System and State of California that are sufficient to support educational programs. Fiscal accountability, stability, and integrity are provided by annual independent audits of financial statements, supplemented by periodic studies as prescribed by system-wide policy. The results of these audits are publicly available on the University web site. The current operating budget from state-supported funds is approximately \$84 million, augmented by other funding sources such as the state lottery, extended education, grants and contracts, and donor gifts. Aggressive leadership continues for securing multiple sources of revenue and less dependency on state appropriations. Examples include strategies for University advancement through gifts, corporate and foundation funding, college-based initiatives for specialized fundraising, self-support programs that serve specialized audiences, and partnerships with local schools and community colleges.

Fiscal accountability measures and financial planning processes are designed to ensure that resources are expended prudently and in alignment with University priorities. The President provides fiscal leadership in consultation with the President's Executive Cabinet, the Faculty Budget Advisory Committee (FBAC) and the University Budget Advisory Committee. FBAC is an Academic Senate governance committee that advises administration on broad fiscal policy, planning and allocation issues, and annual budget priorities. The Chair-elect of FBAC, two faculty at-large representatives, one California Faculty Association representative, one college dean, one student representative, three staff members, the provost, and the vice president for Business and Finance all serve on the University Budget Advisory Committee, which advises the President on broad policy and priority issues related to the University's budget resources.

While the CSU system-wide budget is subject to the variability of state revenue and allocations, the financial capacity of CSU Stanislaus remains solvent. Since the last WASC reaccreditation visit, the campuses of the CSU have faced serious budget constraints, first in 2004 and again in 2008. CSU Stanislaus prioritized maintaining our instructional mission priority, supporting faculty positions, and protecting student access to courses in order to weather these reductions. Hence, budget adjustments occurred primarily in the administrative and academic support units through elimination of temporary staff and non-replacement of staff vacancies, elimination and consolidation of administrative positions, and reductions in operating expenses.

PHYSICAL CAPACITY

Since the last self study, campus facilities have doubled in size. New facilities include Demergasso-Bava Hall (Professional Schools Building), the Mary Stuart Rogers Educational Services Gateway Building, the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center, the Bernell and Flora Snider music recital hall, the Nora and Hashem Naraghi Hall of Science, and the Residence Life Village, which was opened in 1994 for 200 students and has grown to a community of more than 650 students in 2007. This expanded residential space has increased campus capacity to house a freshmen class that has grown by 45% over the past decade. Currently under construction are a new campus bookstore and a student athletics and recreation complex. A library expansion will begin soon and the old science building will be renovated to meet the pedagogical and laboratory requirements of the programs housed within the College of Human and Health Sciences. Complementing the expansion of facilities, landscaping projects – lakes, fountains, bridges, and an outdoor amphitheater –enhance the comfortable, park-like learning environment. The University has the physical capacity to deliver its academic programs; issues surrounding the more efficient allocation and utilization of pedagogical space are explored later in this report.

ORGANIZATION OF THE INQUIRY

As outlined in the *Institutional Proposal*, the heart of the self study consists of reflective essays organized around a set of "Inquiry Questions," as shown in Figure One. Four discrete "Inquiry Circles" were created to address these questions, each composed of approximately a dozen faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The document *Overview of the Self-Study Structure* outlines the relationship of the inquiry process to the campus structures.

FIGURE ONE: COMMUNITIES AND INQUIRY QUESTIONS

COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING	
<i>Inquiry Question One:</i>	How effectively does the University engage a highly diverse student population in learning?
<i>Inquiry Question Two:</i>	How effectively does the University infrastructure support learning?
COMMUNITIES FOR TEACHING	
<i>Inquiry Question Three:</i>	How effectively does the University create and sustain a community of faculty dedicated to teaching and learning?
<i>Inquiry Question Four:</i>	How effectively does the University support research, scholarship, and creative activities (RSCA) appropriate to its mission?

The Inquiry Circles met regularly starting in 2006, and considered these Inquiry Questions from the perspective of the WASC Standards related to purposes, integrity, stability, resources, structures, processes, and policies. Led by experienced faculty members, Inquiry Circle discussions have been frank and open, with the results communicated to faculty governance, deans, central administration, and the Self-Study Team through established University procedures. Membership in the Circles was proscribed to senior administrators and academic deans. The Circles defined the parameters of their Inquiry Questions, aligned them with the WASC Criteria for Review, and divided the Inquiry Questions into smaller “researchable questions” to provide a systematic framework. Recommendations made by the Inquiry Circles for campus consideration have been communicated to appropriate governance and administrative entities; these recommendations and any resultant actions are posted on the appropriate Inquiry Circle web site. Through this process, the Inquiry Circles themselves have become learning communities, as described later in this report. The results of these inquiries are presented in the four thematic essays comprising the core of this report.

COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION OF DATA/EVIDENCE

The University regularly collects a wide variety of data in response to various external agencies and for its own internal processes. In many cases data elements overlap but are configured differently, and the WASC review process requires specific data elements in its own configuration. Common data sets thus were reorganized under the banner of the *Institutional Portfolio* to allow easier tracking and management. Each of the Inquiry Circles coordinated its own data requests, resulting in rather large evidentiary lists and supporting bibliographies. Complete lists and evidentiary data are organized by Inquiry Circle and posted at the appropriate Inquiry Circle website. A comprehensive list of evidence used by the Inquiry Circles, and of the Criteria for Review and their location within this report, is found in *Criteria for Review and Evidence Map*.

The appropriation of data from widely different sources to support the Inquiry Circles affirms University data collection and dissemination processes. Data were obtainable either from regular University data-gathering activities and reports or from national instruments periodically administered by the University.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This self study is organized into six essays: this introductory essay, one thematic essay for each of the four inquiry questions, and an integrative essay. Progress on the specific topics identified by

the WASC Commission in 1999 is summarized in [Appendix X](#), *Response to Previous Commission Concerns*. Although these topics are woven throughout the four thematic essays, the primary focus of the self study remains on engagement and learning, as shown in Figure Two.

FIGURE TWO: THEMATIC INQUIRIES

COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING	
Thematic Essay One:	<i>Engagement and Learning for a Diverse Student Body</i>
Thematic Essay Two:	<i>Infrastructure to Support Student Learning</i>
COMMUNITIES FOR TEACHING	
Thematic Essay Three:	<i>A Community of Teachers in Support of Learning</i>
Thematic Essay Four:	<i>The Role of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities</i>

The report concludes with an Integrative Essay that synthesizes the four inquiry themes, summarizes the findings for institutional capacity, and describes campus preparation and readiness for the Educational Effectiveness Review. In addition, [Appendix X](#), *Outcomes for the Capacity and Preparatory Review* cites achievement of each of the outcomes established for the Capacity and Preparatory Review.

CONCLUSIONS

CSU Stanislaus has operated for nearly 50 years, during which time it has matured in institutional capacity. Its formal policies and operating procedures have increased in sophistication commensurate with student growth, as have the quality and scope of the curriculum, planning, institutional research and quality assurance mechanisms, and collegial governance structures. Similarly, the diversity of its student body – viewed from an institutional capacity perspective – has become more central to institutional research considerations, campus policy deliberations, general education goals, and academic/co-curricular support structures. Along with the capacity of our community, people, finances, and physical environment, the institutional capacity of CSU Stanislaus is aligned with WASC expectations for core commitments.

In addition, CSU Stanislaus' capacity strength is derived from the California State University system. Within the context of CSU system policy, each of the 23 campuses in the system retains significant autonomy with regard to mission, identity, and programs. At the same time, the institutional management, governance, analytical studies, curriculum, teaching, research, faculty and staff development, planning, fiscal, and policy capacity of CSU Stanislaus are expanded beyond that possible as an independent university.

As documented throughout this self study, the University has exceeded minimum compliance with WASC standards. This report demonstrates that the University has aligned its resources and values with clear educational objectives and that the University has coordinated its student and organizational learning processes with widely shared institutional purposes. The University has made assessment and "continual improvement" into cornerstones of everyday campus life. In sum, CSU Stanislaus has completed its work plan and has achieved the outcomes identified in the *Institutional Proposal*.

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW**

**THEMATIC ESSAY ONE
ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING FOR A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY**

Inquiry Question One: How effectively does the University engage a highly diverse student population in learning?

INTRODUCTION

This essay explores the capacity of CSU Stanislaus to support and assess a wide variety of activities and programs designed to encourage engagement in learning and to foster diversity in campus life. The broad parameters of this topic promote attention to the ways in which the University collects and monitors data as well as to the strategies the University employs to motivate, engage, and measure student learning.

In order to guide the examination of this topic, Inquiry Circle One developed three researchable questions.

1. *How does the University define diversity, engagement, and learning communities?*
2. *How does the University promote opportunities for the development of engagement in learning?*
3. *How does the University measure and evaluate diversity, engagement, and student learning?*

Evidence presented in this essay documents the capacity of the University to foster student/faculty engagement, to promote the vibrant diversity of the campus community, and to enhance opportunities for the academic success of all its students.

1. DEFINING DIVERSITY, ENGAGEMENT, AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Research indicates a strong correlation between the engagement of students in learning and students' academic success. This relationship is both made more complex and more rewarding when the student population is highly diverse in terms of educational backgrounds, life experiences, learning styles, and academic skills.

DIVERSITY

Student diversity is a characteristic of everyday life at CSU Stanislaus, reflected in all our statistics and published documents. Far from a mere statistical issue, the faces, names, learning styles, and backgrounds of our students vividly testify to the diversity of campus, as do our increasingly diverse co-curricular organizations and cultural activities. Since at least the early 1990s, student diversity has been a source of pride, anticipation, preparation, and celebration on our campus.

The University is committed to bring the diversity of the faculty more in line with the diversity of the student body. Changes to the curriculum over the past decade attest to this commitment, as discussed later in this report. In addition, two recent initiatives address the nature of campus diversity. One initiative is a faculty committee to promote awareness, understanding, and positive action in diversifying the professoriate; this work is discussed in more depth in Thematic Essay Three. Another initiative is the development of the Diversity Website, which combines

input from students, staff, faculty, and the community to educate the various constituents of the University community and to celebrate and promote the increasing diversity of the campus and the region. The successful engagement of students, faculty, staff, and administration in the diverse nature of the campus community is one of the key components in achieving the goal of a campus responsive to its highly diverse community.

ENGAGEMENT

The *Institutional Proposal* describes “engagement” as a set of values, behaviors, and strategies that attract and hold student attention through educational experiences and motivate students to become actively involved with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and the development of personal values. From another perspective, “engagement” can be viewed as a series of attractions: attracting students to the campus, attracting students to programs of study, attracting students to persevere and complete their degrees, attracting students to consider themselves as informed citizens capable of intellectual and ethical leadership in the community. The University has made a clear commitment to the concept of engagement, a commitment especially important considering our highly diverse student body and the relatively high number of historically underrepresented students we serve.

Statements published by CSU Stanislaus from the University’s *Mission Statement* (1996) to unit and department documents repeatedly invoke “student engagement” as a necessary and valuable component of the mission of the University. The University *Values Statement* (2005) highlights the concept of “engagement” at all levels, and similar language permeates the University *Strategic Plan*, which begins with the topic, “Student Engagement, Development, and Achievement.” Such institutionalization of the lexicon of “student engagement” is testimony to a commitment in all sectors of the University from the classroom to the Office of the President.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES: ACADEMIC AND AFFINITY

Learning communities at CSU Stanislaus may be described in two ways: as “academic learning communities” and as “affinity groups.” These groups evidence the broad variety of individuals joining together with shared values and interests. How these organizations promote successful student engagement in learning will be assessed and discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Academic Learning Communities are organized by the University to create learning cohorts or to address specific learning outcomes. The primary Academic Learning Community is the academic department. CSU Stanislaus consists of 29 departments, most of which organize specific activities aimed at engaging students in their majors and creating a learning community within the department itself. Departments encourage the development of community through organized study and social activities and through courses designed around engaging student-centered models, such as senior seminars and capstones.

The formal approach to developing learning communities is observed most notably on the graduate level. The Master of Social Work program, for example, is designed as a cohort-based program emphasizing “a community of learners” within the cohort itself, and designating the “community” as the locus of research and learning. Other programs that function on this model include the MSBA program in International Finance and the MA program in Interdisciplinary Studies: Child Development. These cohort-based programs encourage graduate students to work

as a learning community towards a common goal, learning from one another throughout their experience and taking valuable contacts with them into the field following graduation. The development of academic learning communities also occurs through eleven disciplinary honor societies and clubs, and the University is proud to host a chapter of the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

Affinity Groups are those that coalesce around cultural, professional, religious, political, recreational, social, and service dimensions. In 2006-07, the University sponsored seventy-one chartered affinity groups, as varied as the Hmong Students Club, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Hunger Network, the Village Council, the World Student Organization, numerous academic sororities and fraternities, and various discipline-based clubs. Student participation has averaged about 1,000 students annually over the past three years.

2. PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Interdisciplinary and co-curricular programs such as First-Year Experience, the Summit Program, Supplemental Instruction, Honors, the Faculty Mentor Program, Service Learning, and International Education explicitly promote community building and student engagement in learning.

The First-Year Experience Program integrates two lower-division General Education courses and a special two-unit seminar within a specific theme, forming a community for first-time, first-year students. In 2006-07, students chose from thirteen learning communities: eleven designed for all students, one designed for student athletes, and one designed for Liberal Studies majors. First-Year Experience annual reports indicate that the program is especially effective in retaining first-generation students. In its first year (2004-05), more than 90% of the 84 participating students were first generation, and about 83% of these students were retained into the next year, as compared to an 81% overall retention rate for Freshmen. Subsequent reports have indicated similar results.

The Summit Program is a multiple-term learning community that fulfills upper-division General Education requirements. Ordinarily, students select one course from each of three areas: Mathematics/Sciences, Humanities, and Social Sciences. The Summit Program links two courses under a common theme across two terms. Summit students report higher than average satisfaction with the General Education program when compared to students in equivalent General Education courses. The Summit Program also functions as a “first-year experience” for transfer students. These students remark on the particular benefits of the Summit Program in acclimating them to the University. The *Summit Pilot Assessment* indicates positive effects of the program in terms of retention and persistence rates. The Summit Program is scheduled for an Academic Program Review in 2008-09; results from this review will allow the University to continue monitoring the effectiveness of the program.

Supplemental Instruction, funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Title V Hispanic Serving Institutions Program, provides group study to students in historically difficult courses. Since 2004, CSU Stanislaus has provided Supplemental Instruction sessions in chemistry, economics, and mathematics. Approximately 38% of students enrolled in participating courses attend the designated Supplemental Instruction sessions. Campus assessment results mirror national

studies, which show that dropout rates decreased and grades increased relative to non-participants.

The University Honors Program is designed for students who seek active engagement in an academic learning community and a challenging program of study suited to the cultivation of strong intellectual curiosity. Students must express an interest in academic challenge and exhibit a successful track record of academic learning to be considered for admission to the program. Coursework is theme-based and linked across semesters. Considerable assessment of student learning is embedded throughout the program, including pre- and post-assessment in the first and fourth years of the program, course assignments requiring application of skills and aptitudes developed in earlier stages of Honors coursework, and a senior capstone thesis or research project. Senior projects are presented at a year-end Capstone Research Conference open to the entire campus community, and articles are featured in an annual journal.

The Faculty Mentor Program provides mentors and educational and recreational programs to first generation and educationally or economically disadvantaged students. Mentors receive training before they are matched with student “protégés.” Program staff and mentors teach a one-unit seminar of First-Year Experience specifically for Faculty Mentor Program students. The Faculty Mentor Program supports student learning through a combination of direct mentor interaction, guided support programs (including workshops and retreats), and a strong sense of community. The Program historically has a very high retention rate: over the past seven years, the rate for first-time, first-year students is over 85%. The program has trained nearly 100 faculty mentors in its 23-year history, serving over 1,400 protégés; currently, 34 mentors (including the provost) are actively working with 140 protégés. The Program was commended in a 2007 joint resolution of the California State Legislature.

The Office of Service Learning supports approximately 50 different course sections and annually offers an estimated 2,000 students the opportunity to participate in service-based courses. CSU Stanislaus promotes service learning as a valued part of the educational process that deepens the academic experience and expands the civic engagement of students while challenging their assumptions and developing critical thinking skills. In 2005, Campus Compact recognized California State University, Stanislaus as a national model of civic and community engagement and featured student work in the publication, *One with the Community: Indicators of Engagement at Minority-Serving Institutions*. Student surveys indicate that service learning enhances student engagement in learning; these data will be reported and discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

The Office of International Education recruits international students to campus and supports opportunities for CSU Stanislaus students and faculty to participate in programs abroad. Students can participate in yearlong programs offered by the CSU International Program and variable-term programs offered through the University Study Abroad Consortium, which together offer programs in 25 host countries. In addition, CSU Stanislaus offers Bilateral Exchange opportunities in Mexico, Denmark, the Netherlands, Taiwan, and a winter term in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Approximately 80 CSU Stanislaus students participate in study abroad per year.

GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Through various methods, the Graduate School provides fiscal support for graduate students to engage more centrally in the life of the academy while contributing to their intellectual development. Graduate fee waivers, fellowships, and equity scholarships require students to contribute to the instructional and/or research functions of the university by serving as traditional graduate teaching and research assistants or in other discipline-based roles (e.g., facilitating assessment of student learning to meet professional accreditation standards). Additionally, several fee revenue sources support graduate thesis/project research, collaborative faculty/student research endeavors, and travel to system and disciplinary conferences.

Three programs administered by the Graduate School promote undergraduate engagement, learning, and post-baccalaureate success. *The California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education* is designed to introduce first-generation college students to the career opportunities and academic challenges associated with graduate-level study. *The California Pre-Doctoral Program* and *The Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program* are designed to increase the diversity of the pool from which the California State University draws its faculty by supporting the doctoral aspirations of undergraduate students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages, and by providing financial assistance and forgivable loans to graduate students who show promise of becoming strong candidates for CSU instructional faculty positions. Thirty-four Stanislaus students have participated in the *Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program* since its inception in 1987.

GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES

Our students experience engagement in the campus community through leadership in governance activities. The governance arm of Associated Students, Inc. (ASI) is comprised of 16 Senators representing each college, each level (undergraduate and graduate), student organizations, diversity, environment, and residential life. Among the core goals expressed in the *ASI Vision Statement* is that members “demonstrate the ability to respect others and problem solve in a collaborative atmosphere.” ASI also conducts programming, recreation and wellness activities. The ASI President represents students at numerous venues, including the University President's Advisory Board. ASI names student representatives to campus governance committees, and students are well represented on all major policy committees, including two voting seats on Academic Senate. Students named by ASI serve on the Self-Study Team and on all four of the Inquiry Circles for the self study.

3. MEASURING AND EVALUATING DIVERSITY, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT LEARNING

The University utilizes a variety of methods to track the diverse characteristics of its student body and to evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts to support student learning and engagement. The University has completed a systematic analysis of the responsibility for assessment-related functions. The results of this internal study may be found in the documents *Who's Responsible for What* and *Ten Methods to Examine Institutional Effectiveness*. The infrastructure that supports student learning, including its assessment, is explored in detail in Thematic Essay Two. A selection of measures derived from our Core Indicators demonstrating the range and depth of regular campus inquiry into diversity in the curriculum, student engagement, and student learning may be found in the data element *Measures of Diversity, Engagement, and Learning*.

ASSESSING DIVERSITY IN THE CURRICULUM

Students engage with the diversity of the modern world in a variety of classroom settings provided chiefly through the General Education Program. Every general education course is expected to address learning goals that include Social Responsibility and Global or Multicultural Perspectives. In addition, the University in 1998 adopted a new multicultural requirement for general education, which has its own specific goals and objectives. More than fifty courses satisfy this requirement. Curricular development of the general education program is addressed in more detail in Thematic Essay Three.

ASSESSING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

In order to broaden University understanding of the relationship between student engagement in learning and student academic success, the University in 2006-07 participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), supplemented by the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). Several additional questions for faculty were developed as an addendum to the FSSE instruments. The findings of these surveys will inform University-wide discussions of this relationship through the Educational Effectiveness Review cycle. Other campus-wide activities that will stimulate continuing discussions of the meaning of “engagement” are planned for the 2008-2009 academic year, including workshops sponsored by Associated Students, Inc., the Village (student housing), and the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

The University assesses undergraduate and graduate student learning in a variety of ways in addition to the assessments conducted by faculty members in their specific courses. Four key initiatives demonstrate the enhancement of our institutional capacity in the assessment of undergraduate student learning over the past decade: 1) implementation of the CSU-mandated *Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement*, 2) the acceleration of formal assessment of General Education, 3) the creation of a Faculty Coordinator of Assessment of Student Learning and the Program Assessment Coordinators, and 4) the revision of the CSU-mandated *Academic Program Review* process. The last two of these topics are discussed in detail in Essay Two.

The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement at CSU Stanislaus is a two-step process consisting of a Writing Proficiency Screening Test and an upper-division Writing Proficiency Course to assess undergraduate writing proficiency. The Writing Proficiency Screening Test is required of all students before they enroll in these courses, which develop and demonstrate student writing skill levels commensurate with upper-division work in the major. Each department designates a Writing Proficiency course; the University Writing Committee reviews all Writing Proficiency courses on a five-year cycle. Due to uneven implementation and administration, Academic Senate in 2007 approved a more rigorous system for reporting results to instructors, greater control of enrollment in Writing Proficiency courses, and the creation of courses and tutorial programs to support students who fail.

Assessment of General Education has been the responsibility of the General Education Subcommittee of the University Educational Policies Committee. The subcommittee approves new and revised courses, using the General Education Program Learning Goals as criteria, and evaluates the Academic Program Reviews of General Education courses, making recommendations for improvement as necessary. CSU General Education-Breadth Requirements are designed so that, taken with the major depth program and electives presented by each

baccalaureate candidate, they will assure that graduates have made noteworthy progress toward becoming truly educated persons. The formal assessment of the General Education program has not achieved the robust growth of that of departmental programs, as discussed in the Integrative Essay. To accelerate formal assessment of program performance, the campus established a Faculty Director of General Education in spring 2008. A primary task of the director is the completion of the General Education Academic Program Review, through which the effectiveness of the program in supporting student learning will be analyzed. The Academic Program Review will suggest ways to understand and better prepare for differences in the academic preparation of diverse incoming students, be they freshmen or transfer students. To help in this review, the University has participated in the *Collegiate Learning Assessment* examination for the past two years and piloted the *Information and Communication Technology Literacy Assessment*, since renamed *iSkills*. Data from these two endeavors will assist the Faculty Director and the General Education subcommittee in evaluating overall student performance assessment strategies and priorities and will contribute to the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Assessment of Graduate Student Learning occurs primarily through departmental efforts under policies approved by the Graduate Council. The Council has identified six student-learning goals for graduate students, published in the Graduate School Catalog. In 1997, the Graduate Council established an assessment plan and now conducts periodic reviews of three interrelated categories of assessment: student learning outcomes, faculty quality, and program quality. The Graduate Council continually assesses the achievement of these goals using a combination of student exit, alumni, and employer surveys, graduate student course evaluations, external evaluations by accrediting agencies, graduate enrollment information (e.g., admissions, time to degree), Academic Program Reviews, and analyses of student academic performance. Lastly, every master's degree candidate must complete a culminating experience. Graduate theses, projects, and/or comprehensive examinations are highly individualized assessments in which graduate students must demonstrate mastery of the subject matter, critical and independent thinking, research skills, and rhetorical sophistication.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the last decade, CSU Stanislaus has greatly expanded its capacity to create and sustain communities of learners, to engage and support student learning, and to assess student-learning outcomes. Affinity groups, academic communities, and numerous co-curricular support systems in Student Affairs, such as support systems for diverse underrepresented students, all help sustain student engagement with campus life and promote academic success.

Successful engagement is often serendipitous in that individual instructors create activities and programs to meet special needs as they arise. An engaged campus community is enhanced by the more prominent identification, recognition, and promotion of those activities and programs that lead to successful engagement and learning. As discussed in the Integrative Essay, numerous activities have been identified to campus organizations that support this enhancement, and their effectiveness will be discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

In this essay we have described numerous mechanisms for assessing diversity, engagement, and student learning. We have described the University's considerable capacity for promoting opportunities for development of student engagement via curricular and co-curricular programs. These programs will be evaluated during the next phase of the self study to assess how they

contribute to educational effectiveness. In the next Thematic Essay, we discuss the ways the University has developed and funded infrastructures to support and to assess student learning.

DRAFT

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW**

**THEMATIC ESSAY TWO
INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING**

Inquiry Question Two: How effectively does the University infrastructure support learning?

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, CSU Stanislaus has created new infrastructure to support student learning and has expanded and reconstituted existing programs, facilities, and services. "Infrastructure" is used here in an inclusive sense to indicate physical structures and the campus environment, support staff, technological and material resources for learning, and policies and procedures that guide the efforts of the University in these areas.

In order to examine this theme, the Infrastructural Support Inquiry Circle organized its investigation around four researchable questions.

1. *How well does the University Library support learning and engagement?*
2. *How well do the University's technological resources support learning and student engagement?*
3. *How effectively do the University's support services meet the needs of its students?*
4. *Does the University have well-established policies and procedures for gathering and analyzing information about our students' engagement and learning, and does this analysis lead to systematic and continual improvement of our programs and student services?*

Evidence presented in this essay affirms the capacity of the Library and the Office of Information Technology to support student engagement in learning, of support services units to assess the needs of its students and to meet them productively, and of the University to gather and process data regarding effectiveness strategies employed by the institution.

1. THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN SUPPORT OF LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

The University Library supports learning and engagement through its collections, through the provision of remote access to online resources, through an active instructional program that fosters information literacy, and by offering gathering spaces for study and collaboration. The *Library Strategic Plan* developed in preparation for the Library's Support Unit Review and the *Library Collection Development Policy* (2004) guide the process of enhancing services and capacities. This essay addresses the capacity of the University Library to support student learning; the specific aspects of University Library support for teaching and for research are described in greater detail in Thematic Essays Three and Four, as appropriate.

PHYSICAL COLLECTION AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

The *Library Collection Development Policy* establishes priorities and principles for the acquisition and provision of library materials in all formats. Appointed members of discipline-based faculty share selection responsibility for library collections with library faculty. The Library's Support Unit Review includes an analysis of holdings by discipline, revealing that the collection reflects and supports subjects actively being taught.

The Library has seen modest but steady growth of physical (print) collections over the last decade. Volumes currently number 372,231. Print periodical subscriptions are the exception, having declined from a high of 2,130 in 1996-97 to 1,238 in 2006-07. This decline may reflect a trend towards the cancellation of print periodicals when they are available in electronic form. An active interlibrary loan service expands access beyond the Library's collection, filling 5,312 requests for library patrons in 2006-07.

LIBRARY USER SERVICES

An active instruction program provided by highly qualified, service-oriented library faculty members is comprised of sessions tailored to specific course needs, multiple sections of a two-credit course focused on library research methods, and one-on-one instruction either at the Reference Desk or by appointment. These services are aimed at making students aware of library resources and research methods, and at increasing their competence and effectiveness as information users. An increase in the number of computers available for student use, from 18 internet-only computers to 48 computers equipped with the same suite of software as those in the student computer laboratories, has significantly facilitated the ability of library faculty to engage with students.

Currently, the University Library is open 81 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters, 69 hours during winter, and 48 during summer, offering a variety of spaces to accommodate both independent and group work and different learning styles. Library faculty members continue to investigate alternative service models, in many cases strategically designing and offering services with the aim of helping users help themselves. In 2007-08 the University Library upgraded to a state-of-the-art integrated library catalog system, greatly improving access and functionality. The University Library website was redesigned with similar expectations. A planned expansion, scheduled for construction within the next five years, will augment the capacity of the University Library to serve all its many users.

The Library Access Center at the Stockton Center is designed to serve the research needs of the faculty, staff, and students at the Stockton Center. In addition to a select collection of reference and reserve materials, patrons of the Library Access Center and those who use distance learning opportunities have access to online resources, as well as the resources available at the main library in Turlock which are made available through document delivery and courier service. Interlibrary loan is also available to Stockton students. While there are no physical library facilities at off-campus locations other than Stockton, document delivery, courier service, and online access as well as interlibrary loan are available to students at other distance-learning sites. Surveys of Stockton Center faculty and students reveal varying degrees of agreement that Library Access Center services are adequate. Among students, 61.4% found the Library Access Center adequate; among faculty only 50%. Ways of improving this satisfaction index will be pursued through the Educational Effectiveness Review.

BUDGET AND STAFF

While enrollments have steadily increased, the Library budget has fluctuated, increasing from \$1.8 million in 1997-98 (4.0% of the University's total budget) to \$2.6 million in 2003-04 (4.7%). Decreases in base budgets that occurred due to the severe statewide budget crises in 2004-05 and 2005-06 were partially offset by one-time budget augmentations. Currently, the 2007-08 library budget of \$2.6 million represents 3.1% of the total university budget.

Analysis of library positions since 1998 shows an increase from eight faculty (librarian) members in 1996-97 to nine in 2007-08. The same ten-year period shows an increase from 13 staff positions in 1996-97 to 16 in 2006-07. Among staffing categories, the greatest fluctuation is in student assistant positions, which reflects both wage increases and fluctuations in funding. The library could not function as well as it does without the help of student assistants, and ways of improving this area will be pursued through the self study.

2. TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF LEARNING AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

A key element in student and faculty success is academic technology, which has undergone a significant transformation in the past ten years. For this reason, the University elected to provide a special focus on the topic throughout the self study. The data element *Enhancement of Technological Services Since 1998* presents a list of highlights in the enhancement of University technological services to increase instructional capacity and access to students.

The University provides technological resources and support through the Office of Information Technology (OIT). The responsibilities of OIT include academic and administrative computing, campus telephone and information networks, and distance learning. The campus has recently reorganized its oversight and development functions to increase participation and enhance effective capacity in this area. The Learning and Technology Subcommittee of the University Educational Policies Committee combines the work of two previous committees and provides important policy development and implementation guidance. The newly formed OIT Advisory Council will provide guidance at the policy level for the spectrum of strategic technology issues; similarly, an OIT Technology Forum will serve at the operational level with technical staff as a communication channel for operations-oriented procedures and concerns.

In 1996, the CSU Board of Trustees approved the system-wide *Integrated Technology Strategy-Technology Infrastructure Initiative* framework for leveraging technology as a tool to achieve CSU academic and administrative goals. This framework continues to guide the CSU's system-wide investments in technology and provides common parameters, target baselines, and funding for campus technological services. The annual *Measures of Success* publication, first issued in 1999, is the vehicle through which the CSU informs the state legislature about the progress and benefits of the Integrated Technology Strategy. These annual reports measure progress in the following outcome categories: Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Quality of the Student Experience, Administrative Productivity and Quality, and Personal Productivity.

THE ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Over several years and with broad constituent participation, the University developed a comprehensive *Academic Technology Plan* (2003) to guide development and establish priorities. The Plan places emphasis on making learning accessible to students and establishes a set of principles by which technology should enhance teaching and learning. The Plan identifies several recurring areas of need, including specialized laboratories (such as geographic information systems, computer information systems, languages, and music), distance learning, assistive technology, information competency, proficiency expectations for students, accreditation, and technical support. OIT is responsible for implementing the Plan, with

monitoring and review by the Learning and Technology Subcommittee and the OIT Advisory Council.

The Academic Technology Plan prioritizes the computing needs of full-time faculty, with a policy to replace computers on a three-year cycle. The University has increased computer workstations for use by part-time faculty and is continuing to bring the University to the baseline hardware standards recommended by the Integrated Technology Strategy-Technology Infrastructure Initiative.

Learning management systems are used both in distance applications and to supplement classroom activities. In fall 2007, 427 courses incorporated web-based components, including learning management systems. As of spring 2008, all Turlock classrooms are equipped to accommodate computer-based multimedia presentations, and technological upgrades for the Stockton Center are underway. Training is available for faculty in both classroom management tools and learning management systems through the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, as described in Thematic Essay Three.

Wireless access will be available throughout 100% of the Turlock campus indoor and outdoor areas by December 2008. The Stockton Center and distance learning sites in Merced and Sonora currently receive classes transmitted by educational broadcast systems, and the University has developed a plan to migrate to Internet protocol-based transmission technology during 2008. A substantial increase in communication bandwidth supporting the Stockton Center will be implemented in 2008, along with reliability improvements to enable Stockton to communicate more effectively with the rest of the University.

While progress has been made in some areas of the Plan, the campus has identified areas for further work. These include the development of additional capacity for supporting faculty in the use of learning management systems, instructional design, production, and training. In reviewing the WASC standards, staff campus-wide identified supporting staff operations and improving information technology for administrative computing for priority attention with regard to increased institutional capacity. Staff responses to the ways in which the university could improve its support of information technology resources in order to provide key academic and administrative functions were primarily focused on increased training in using technology for greater efficiency.

The last Support Unit Review identified a priority to create a sustainable model for funding for technological support, especially for increasing the numbers and providing support for professional development opportunities for Office of Information Technology staff, and to increase outreach to students with regard to security issues, copyright, and information competence skills. Procedures and policies for campus information security are being developed, as are formal policies defining “baseline” end-user training for user groups (faculty, staff, administration, students). System-wide technology initiatives in areas such as security awareness and controls, accessible technology, learning management systems, and infrastructure enhancements support CSU Stanislaus in refining its technology capacities. These measures will be monitored through the Educational Effectiveness Review.

3. SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Campus units such as the University Police, the Student Health Center, and Psychological Counseling Services provide essential services protecting the safety, health, and well being of students, faculty and staff. In addition, the University provides a broad variety of student services in support of academic success, personal well-being, and lifelong learning. While the University supports student learning in a myriad of ways, the areas of student advising, support for under-prepared students, and disability resource services illustrate the wide range of services and actions taken by the campus to improve the quality of support for student success.

STUDENT ADVISING

Student advising, a crucial component of the infrastructure that supports student learning, is addressed at both the institutional and departmental levels. The Advising Resource Center provides infrastructural support for academic advising as well as services that reduce obstacles to student success. Each summer, the Advising Resource Center offers a mandatory New Student Orientation providing first-contact advising to both first-year and transfer students. Ten one-day sessions were offered in summer 2007 (eight in Turlock and two in Stockton), attended by approximately 2,000 students. Once students declare a major they are assigned an advisor from within their major department; until that time they are advised by the Advising Resource Center.

In order to assure that advising meets the needs of our student population, a task force was convened in 2006 to review current policies and make recommendations for improvement. For example, Associated Students, Inc. members cited the unevenness of advising across departments and individual faculty members as a current concern. Several additional concerns were identified in the report emerging from the task force, which recommended revisions to academic advising policies and procedures, and articulated broad advising principles. These revisions, including faculty professional development opportunities and departmental-level systems, will be implemented in 2008 and tracked through the Educational Effectiveness Review.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR UNDER-PREPARED STUDENTS

The University provides a wide variety of programs and services to support the engagement and academic success of its students. Improving instruction for students requiring remediation is an example of a cross-campus effort with a significant positive impact in the classroom. On average over the past decade, 65% of entering freshmen required some form of remediation in either English or mathematics (or both) to meet CSU standards. The Successful Remediation Committee, a cross-divisional committee formed in 2000, analyzed the needs of students moving through remedial course work. The University responded with increased workshops and personal advising to assist students in completing their remediation coursework. As a result of these and other efforts, CSU Stanislaus increased the percentage of first year students who attain proficiency in their first year from 77% in 1999 to 96% in 2007, consistent with the state average.

The Tutoring Center is one of the most successful of our learning-support services. CSU Stanislaus offers one-on-one or group tutoring support to all students free of charge. Data indicate a steady increase in the number of students served: over the last four years, an average of 33.4% of the student population has taken advantage of these services. In 2006-07, the Center employed 118 tutors logging 20,470 hours with students. The Center is developing formal policies and procedures and a process for continuous review to respond to needs as they are identified.

The English for Speakers of Other Languages Program serves a wide range of students: freshmen coming from other language backgrounds who scored low on the English Placement Test, upper-division students who did not pass the Writing Proficiency Screening Test, graduate students working to pass graduate examinations, and newly arrived international students. The strengths of these courses are small class size (approximately 15 students), individualized diagnostic profiles of language problems, and one-on-one tutoring by trained tutors who are closely supervised by the instructors.

Student Support Services and the *Educational Opportunity Program* are two grant-funded services specializing in support for students who qualify for the CSU but who may not be prepared to take full advantage of the University due to their educational or economic background. Student Support Services annually offers special intensive academic retention services for 250 participants, recruited from low income, first generation, and/or disabled students with academic support needs. The Educational Opportunity Program offers financial assistance and advising from the admissions process through graduation, and also offers the Summer Bridge Program to strengthen math, reading, and writing skills in anticipation of entering the University. In 2006, 606 students were supported through the Educational Opportunity Program, and 42 students participated in Bridge 2007.

DISABILITY RESOURCE SERVICES

The Office of Disability Resource Services provides accommodations and support services to assist students with special needs to participate actively in all aspects of the University's programs and services and to obtain their educational goals. The Office provides support for students with learning disabilities, but does not provide testing services for those disabilities, instead referring students to outside providers. The Stockton Center receives periodic visits from Disability Resource Services personnel. Once identified by outside providers, the Office focuses its resources on providing services to students with learning disabilities.

Campus entities such as computer laboratories and the University Library provide supplemental access for special needs students through assistive technology. The CSU *Accessible Technology Initiative* sets parameters and procedures for guaranteeing access for all faculty, students, and staff through assistive technology. This issue is especially crucial for users of our many open computer laboratories, and the initiative addresses the issue by establishing policies to ensure that laboratories are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities, that equipment and software are kept current, and that training is provided on the use of assistive technology. Systems are in place to address identified issues, such as the adaptation of large classrooms for assistive listening technology.

The University Educational Policy Committee continues its deliberations regarding the best methods for ensuring the highest level of student learning for students with disabilities. Included in their policy recommendations are a process for early identification of students with disabilities, increasing use of learning management systems for delivering technology-enabled hybrid courses, incorporation of accessibility requirements in purchasing digital instructional materials, and institutional infrastructure support for faculty in creating accessible course content. The effectiveness of these combined efforts will be addressed throughout the self study.

4. POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The University coordinates campus-wide assessment efforts through a comprehensive structure. The Assessment of Student Learning Subcommittee of the University Educational Policies Committee coordinates the faculty-driven process for making recommendations regarding assessment policies, plans, resources and programmatic needs, an excellent example of a faculty governance structure directly supporting student learning. The Assessment Leadership Team is a University-wide group whose purpose is to encourage and facilitate good assessment practices throughout each of the campus divisions by engaging the campus community in on-going discussions and actions regarding student learning and continual improvement of institutional effectiveness. Finally, the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance coordinates university-wide efforts for improving student learning and enhancing institutional effectiveness.

The University has significantly increased its capacity to promote and support assessment throughout the institution, but especially in the assessment of student learning, through investment in two support offices – the Office of Institutional Research, and the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance. Both offices represent significant campus capacity for evaluating student demographic, engagement, performance, and retention data. Institutional Research is the central data collection and data management entity on campus, and informs all institutional and systemic evaluations. Assessment and Quality Assurance serves a leadership function and provides operational resources for assessment initiatives. Clearly defined written policies and procedures guide these structures and organizations, the most important of which is the *Principles of Assessment of Student Learning* (2004).

The University uses a variety of methods for evaluating data derived from direct and indirect assessment measures at the classroom, program, and University levels. Classroom level assessment is the exclusive province of individual faculty for improving instruction and student learning. Program evaluation occurs internally by departments/colleges and externally by specialized accreditation processes for programmatic improvement. A full list of departmental methods is available in *Program-Level Assessment Methods* (2007). At the university level, evaluation of assessment results occurs by governance committees and administrative groups through formal academic program and support unit reviews. A selection of university-wide measures is available in *Inventory of University-Wide Measures* (2007). Complementing the internal evaluation systems for student learning and institutional effectiveness is external accountability reporting, such as those for WASC, the CSU system, and the state legislature.

FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN ASSESSMENT

The Faculty Coordinator of Assessment of Student Learning was established in 1999 to help guide campus discussions on student learning assessment. The Faculty Coordinator works to enhance student success, classroom teaching innovation, and formal and informal assessments that demonstrate student academic achievement. Additionally, the Faculty Coordinator encourages professional development and provides leadership for faculty assessment of student-learning outcomes.

A fundamental principle of the CSU system, and that practiced at CSU Stanislaus, engages campus faculty collaboratively to share and discuss publicly the knowledge, skills, and values they believe students need; to accept responsibility for assessing students for demonstration of

those outcomes; and to use the results of that assessment for the improvement of academic programs. In working with faculty, the Faculty Coordinator for the Assessment of Student Learning has been guided by the goal of identifying the intellectual outcomes faculty expect of students and intentionally to infuse the development – and assessment – of these outcomes into the institution's teaching and learning process.

Campus momentum accelerated in 2005 with the establishment of Program Assessment Coordinators (PACs), faculty members in each department who receive assigned time (or the equivalent) provided by the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance. The PACs work with department or program faculty to facilitate program-level assessment. Coordinated by the PAC representative, each academic program has developed a *Program Assessment Plan* that reflects the methods faculty have determined will assess student learning most effectively for each of the program's student learning objectives. The PACs thereby identify processes whereby student learning is used to assess program strength and effectiveness. *Assessment Updates* are completed annually and provide a summary and evaluation of the methods used to assess student learning and specify what actions will be taken as a result. A comprehensive listing of assessment methods can be found in *Program-Level Assessment Methods* (2007).

The PACs also serve as members of the Assessment Council. The Assessment Council is an interdisciplinary group, comprised of Program Assessment Coordinators and the Faculty Coordinator for the Assessment of Student Learning, which meets monthly to review new information in assessment and share ideas and best practices. Members share strategies and assist one another in the development, coordination, and successful application of departmental assessments of student learning. Having the Assessment Council as a resource for the PACs has greatly increased the level and intensity of assessment-related discussions at both program and University levels, a fact prominently noted by Dr. Mary Allen in her external review conducted in fall 2007.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND SUPPORT UNIT REVIEWS

Assessment of student learning occurs through the mandated comprehensive periodic reviews of each academic program and each administrative support unit on campus. These reviews are overseen by the Office of the Provost, and units receive assistance in completing them from the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance.

The *Academic Program Review* (APR) process is the principal vehicle for assessing and improving the quality of academic programs. The review is mandated by the CSU Chancellor's Office and is required of all academic departments and programs. The Academic Program Review policy was substantially revised and strengthened in 2004, and now cites "the identification and evaluation of student learning goals as a key indicator of program effectiveness." Through the Academic Program Review, each academic program undergoes a substantial self study every seven years (or as prescribed by disciplinary accreditation procedures). The results of the Review guide planning and resource allocation within the department. Eleven programs on campus – including two colleges (Business Administration and Education) and nine departments (Art, Music, Theatre, Chemistry, Genetic Counseling, Public Administration, Nursing, Psychology, and Social Work) – conduct comprehensive assessment processes in order to maintain national accreditation.

The *Support Unit Review*, initiated in 2004, was developed to ensure the continual improvement of University administrative processes. Every five years, each unit completes a Review consisting of a self-study report and an external review. This process gathers comprehensive data (including evaluation processes), measures management and efficiency, determines if resources are allocated and used effectively, and draws conclusions about the effectiveness of the unit's support for the University's mission, values, and goals. One of the special areas addressed by this review is how the unit contributes to and/or supports student learning. Methods vary by unit and include the Balanced Scorecard used by the division of Business and Finance, and standards developed by the Council of Assessment Standards used by the division of Student Affairs discussed below. Based on the conclusions, a strategic implementation plan is developed that includes future goals, strategies, and expected outcomes.

CO-CURRICULAR ASSESSMENT

In addition to the assessment of student learning, the Division of Student Affairs has developed assessment rubrics and strategic planning processes that identify and prioritize the values surrounding student development, learning outcomes, and the division mission and actions. Guided by elements provided by the Council for the Advancement of Standards, all divisions of Student Affairs participate in a robust assessment program. This program was recently enhanced by focusing and streamlining student learning outcomes along competencies developed by *Learning Reconsidered*, a joint publication of the American College Personnel Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. The system employed by Student Affairs is linked to the Assessment Leadership Team and the Accreditation Liaison Officer, connects directly to strategic planning within the division, and is driven by data. A scheduled comprehensive review, including an external review team, is planned for 2008-09. The results of this review will aid the University in examining the effectiveness of these efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

The University Library demonstrates the capacity to support student learning through comprehensive analysis and continual improvement. A Library *Strategic Plan* identifies issues for additional attention and prioritizes actions taken to address them. As they arise, new issues are addressed through a regular process. Since 1999, the University has substantially increased its capacity to provide technological resources to support student learning and engagement. A comprehensive *Academic Technology Plan* identifies priorities implemented by a central administrative office whose work is guided by a faculty committee. While there are recurring challenges, these challenges often are inherent to the use of technology, and are addressed regularly. The effectiveness of the Library Strategic Plan and the Academic Technology Plan will be discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

The University demonstrates the capacity to assess student support services using nationally normed procedures to ensure reliability and effectiveness. A wide range of services affords students the opportunity to succeed and effective measures to support their success when they falter. Systems are in place to identify areas where increased attention is warranted, and to address change in meaningful and effective ways.

The University demonstrates the capacity to support student learning through comprehensive analysis and continual improvement. The revised *Academic Program Review* process has enhanced capacities to assess student learning at both the baccalaureate and graduate levels. The Office of

Assessment and Quality Assurance provides vigorous leadership through a myriad of support and guidance activities. The Office of Institutional Research has expanded its capacity to evaluate student performance across a number of variables. Issues identified for additional attention are addressed through a regular process, with clearly defined policies, procedures, and practices.

In sum, the University is proud of the development of policies and procedures since the last self study and is encouraged by its review processes for continual improvement. The University clearly demonstrates its capacity in each of the areas under consideration. While the current review notes areas for continued improvement, the University has developed policies and procedures to allow these improvements to occur. The effectiveness of this process of improvement will be a part of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

DRAFT

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

THEMATIC ESSAY THREE
A COMMUNITY OF TEACHERS IN SUPPORT OF LEARNING

Inquiry Question Three: How effectively does the University create and sustain a community of faculty committed to teaching and learning?

INTRODUCTION

This essay explores the capacity of the University to support a community of teacher-scholars, to create a learning-centered environment that fosters interdisciplinary communities among faculty members, and to provide support for faculty professional development and the continuous improvement of student learning. In order to address this topic, the Teaching and Learning Inquiry Circle created four “researchable questions.”

1. *How well does the University create a sense of a “teacher-scholar” community?*
2. *How effectively do we support teaching in terms of curriculum, infrastructure, scheduling, funding, access to materials, the library, and technological support?*
3. *How well do we attract, recruit, retain, as well as develop and reward a diverse, qualified faculty dedicated to working within our learning-centered mission?*
4. *How well does our teaching support student learning?*

Evidence presented in this essay affirms the capacity of the University to create a sense of community, to support teaching and learning through a myriad of supports and programs, and to support the development of a diverse faculty as teacher-scholars.

1. “TEACHER-SCHOLAR” COMMUNITIES

Since a forum held on campus more than a decade ago to discuss Boyer’s *Scholarship Revisited* (1990), faculty members at CSU Stanislaus increasingly have used the term “teacher-scholar” as a self-identifier. While not part of any official campus policy, a colloquial understanding has emerged that in addition to conducting traditional research a “teacher-scholar” continues to develop understanding of student learning styles and constructs assignments, activities, and content presentation accordingly. Teacher-scholars serve as both mentors and models of lifelong learning for students, introducing them to controversial topics within the field, developing interdisciplinary connections, and creating opportunities for self-reflection as well as student scholarship. Supporting this local understanding, the CSU system, through its strategic planning documents and other instruments and activities, has promoted an understanding of CSU faculty as teachers and scholars, supporting the dual emphases on teaching and scholarship related to teaching. The new system strategic plan, *Access to Excellence* (2008), reaffirms this commitment to teaching and to student success, while providing support and incentives to faculty to engage actively in scholarship.

The University values the distinct identities of the 29 departments and six colleges, and recognizes and rewards faculty participation in activities at both department and college levels. Service on campus committees is one way that faculty members are able to participate across

departments and colleges in our teacher-scholar community, by bringing their academic expertise and research acumen to bear on governance issues. Broad campus involvement is evidenced by attendance at semi-annual General Faculty meetings and faculty membership on fourteen governance committees and sub-committees. Furthermore, changes in communication technology over the past decade have created new “e-communities” for campus faculty to connect with colleagues across disciplines in discussions that do not require face-to-face conversation.

In addition, the colleges are developing as focused intellectual communities, providing faculty in related disciplines the opportunity for collaboration and sustained discussion. The many campus centers and interdisciplinary groups further enrich this capacity. The University also promotes connections through interdisciplinary degree programs such as Agricultural Studies, Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, Latin American Studies, Liberal Studies, and Social Sciences, as well as through the Summit General Education Program (as described in Thematic Essay One).

Other activities that help to create and maintain a sense of a community of teacher-scholars include welcoming and orientation activities for new hires, convocations and commencements, lecture series, a summer arts festival, a Stanislaus Leadership Forum, annual gatherings of faculty and staff to honor retiring faculty and acknowledge “outstanding” faculty, and departmental and campus-wide activities held at the Faculty Development Center. Center programs such as the Pedagogy Book Club, the Faculty Voices publication, the interdisciplinary Writing Group, and special sessions aimed at new faculty serve as examples of support for teaching and learning that enhance university-wide community. All of these programs supplement the intensified sense of community within the new colleges with broader university community engagement.

2. UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR TEACHER-SCHOLARS

The University supports faculty members in a variety of ways: infrastructural, material, logistical, and technological. This wide range of activities includes curricular development, support for teaching (including access to materials), technology, information resources, a pedagogy book club, faculty writing groups, and faculty presentations on teaching and learning. Various programs also provide support for faculty as scholars in their personal agendas for research, scholarship and creative activity.

SUPPORTING TEACHING THROUGH CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

Through governance structures at all levels, the faculty at CSU Stanislaus play a central role in the development and approval process for new and revised programs. The *Constitution of the General Faculty* and long-standing campus practice designate primary responsibility for issues related to curriculum and instruction to the faculty. Development begins at the department level, with college curriculum, budget, and planning committees providing additional guidance. Faculty members serving on the University Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) formulate, review, and recommend curricular policy and review and evaluate proposals for new undergraduate programs and courses based on approved criteria and procedures. Through the UEPC and its four standing subcommittees – General Education, University Writing, Assessment of Student Learning, and Learning and Technology – faculty members actively work to develop programs that respond to the needs of our student population. For graduate programs, faculty curricular leadership, program approval, and policy formulation are accomplished through the Graduate Council.

Commitment to supporting faculty in the teaching of a diverse student body is evidenced through consistent development and modification of curricula to meet the needs of our student population. The *Strategic Plan* identifies a campus goal to “prepare students to be leaders in their field who are globally aware and responsive to environmental and sustainability issues.”

Reflecting this goal, notable curricular changes over the last decade include a broader integration of elements related to service learning and global education. The Office of Service Learning supports the development of service-based curricula by securing grant funding, linking faculty with service sites in the region, helping faculty to plan appropriate service projects, and ensuring compliance with risk-management standards. The Office of International Education supports faculty in the internationalization of the curriculum through a wide variety of initiatives such as syllabi revision, increasing international and linguistic expertise, and faculty projects on the departmental and college levels. In 2003, the American Council on Education selected CSU Stanislaus as one of eight U.S. higher education institutions for participation in its “Global Learning for All” project. The project supported campus efforts to improve student learning of international/global content. The 2005 Site Visit Report states that this curricular and assessment project is “groundbreaking work” in the field of international education assessment.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT FOR TEACHING

Physical space at CSU Stanislaus has increased substantially over the past decade, adding classrooms, computer laboratories, and a new building to house nearly all administration and student support services. New instructional facilities have been built for the unique pedagogy of professional programs, laboratory sciences, performing arts, and specialized laboratories for music, languages, psychology, and geographic information systems have been created. New facilities for teaching in professional programs, televised distance-learning classrooms, and new classrooms and laboratories for the sciences attest to greatly enhanced instructional space capacity.

The 10,000 square-foot John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center is the locus of faculty governance, housing the offices of the Academic Senate, and meeting rooms for the many campus committees. The Center also houses the offices of the Academic Senate, California Faculty Association, Service Learning, Assessment of Student Learning, the Faculty Multimedia Laboratory, and the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (FCETL).

SCHEDULING IN SUPPORT OF TEACHING

To meet the needs of consistent enrollment growth for more than two decades, the campus has developed policies to support the effective use and scheduling of instructional space. In 2005, the University proposed policies designed to regularize course offerings, make more predictable classroom assignment procedures, and maximize use of instructional space. In developing this new policy, faculty governance worked with the Office of Enrollment Services and student representatives to develop new scheduling parameters; the new plan focuses particularly on the assignment of class space for evening classes and the best process for allocating space to accommodate student needs.

As reflected in the University’s *Strategic Plan*, utilizing effective classroom scheduling and increasing classroom space are activities the campus has pledged to continue in order to ensure instructional quality for an increasing student population. Continued development of innovative

learning formats, such as fully online, televised, and hybrid courses, will alleviate some pressure for physical classroom space; however, the University recognizes the need for continual and proactive planning in order to ensure that instructional space is aligned with pedagogical and programmatic needs. Although efforts have been made to improve classroom space and course scheduling, committees continue to address these issues. Progress will be addressed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT INFRASTRUCTURE

The University maintains a strong administrative unit infrastructure, serving faculty in all six colleges. Administrative units are required to perform a Support Unit Review every five years, to include specific information concerning how the office or program supports student learning. Each of these offices has completed a Support Unit Review, and the data pertaining to their effectiveness in supporting student learning will be reviewed in the next phase. In addition to the administrative units, the college and academic departments support faculty in teaching by recognizing an organizational structure (dean, chair, faculty, and support staff) that fosters relevant decision-making and recommendations within the department or college concerning curriculum, scheduling, hiring, and assigned time.

THE FACULTY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (FCETL) plays a crucial role in enabling faculty to respond to a diverse student population through workshops, roundtables, lecture series, and presentations on topics related to improving and enriching the way faculty teach and assess student learning. This commitment to faculty development in support of student learning is evident in the FCETL mission, “to provide support for faculty in their roles as teachers, learners, scholars, and members of the university and wider community as a means of enhancing student learning.” In 2006-07, there were 95 sessions related to the improvement of teaching strategies. The FCETL offers instructional technology workshops throughout the semester, including presentations on learning management systems and the use of technologies to support student learning. Since 2003, the FCETL has hosted an average of 80 technology-related workshops and fairs with 200 attendees per year. The FCETL and the Faculty Development Committee sponsor an annual “Instructional Institute Day” – an all-day workshop and discussions on effective teaching and learning attended by faculty from across the campus. The impact of faculty development workshops on teaching effectiveness will be evaluated in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

FACULTY WORKLOAD AND UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

Funding to support faculty occurs at the University, college, and department levels. At the foundation of funding support lies the understanding that instructional responsibilities extend beyond the duties in the classroom to include course preparation, evaluation of student performance, syllabus development and revision, and review of current literature and research, including instructional methodology in subject areas. As a result, the full-time faculty workload normally designates 20% to instructionally related activities and the remainder to a combination of direct instruction and other activities. Data indicate that the actual teaching load for tenured and tenure-track faculty averages 20.8 WTU (approximately seven courses) per year. Full-time lecturers teach an average of 24 WTU (eight courses) per year. Data also indicate broad faculty consensus that this workload is unrealistic in terms of expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service.

Specific terms of the employment contract governing faculty workload between the California Faculty Association and the California State University system are not negotiated at the campus level. The University's *Faculty Workload Agreement*, a campus strategy for implementing the terms of the system-wide contract, is designed to allow faculty and departments to promote the strengths of individuals in addressing the needs of the University, and can help individual faculty tailor a workload that allows for maximum impact on their own careers and the University.

A key objective of the Faculty Workload Agreement is to provide time for faculty research and scholarly endeavors while not eroding the primacy of teaching and dedication to student success. The agreement distinguishes between the categories of direct instruction, indirect instruction, research, scholarship, and creative activity, and other professional activities, and allows faculty members to designate a given weighted amount of time to each category, within stipulated bounds. The provost and deans currently are working with faculty to implement strategies for the reassignment of faculty workload, noting the differential application of this agreement for smaller departments, the specialized curricular demands of their degree programs, and the possible effects on lecturer workloads through increased class sizes. The Faculty Workload Agreement will be a topic for further investigation in the Educational Effectiveness Review as it affects both the teaching and research missions of the University.

OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT FOR TEACHING

Since 2001, the Faculty Mini-grant Program has financially rewarded 52 faculty members for promoting innovative teaching and instructional materials, and 11 faculty members have traveled to teaching conferences. The Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, in conjunction with the Office of Service Learning, has awarded nine additional mini-grants to support travel and for innovative teaching, instructional materials, and development of online courses.

The colleges, departments, and the support units provide funding to support teaching and scholarly activities. Travel funding provided by the colleges for conference participation affords faculty members the opportunity to present their research, network with other scholars, and to remain current by exposing them to new research in their fields. The level of funding for travel depends on the availability of funds at the college level and typically requires that the faculty member be a presenter. While part-time lecturers are currently not eligible for travel funding through the colleges and departments, full-time lecturers are eligible to receive travel grants through the Teaching Initiative Fund. For a decade, faculty members have expressed disappointment with the amount of funding available and the restrictions often imposed. The topic was addressed in the 2007 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement and will be discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Classes at the Stockton Center are taught by Stockton-based faculty as well as by faculty from the Turlock campus, and are part of the normal workload for Stanislaus faculty. Each full-time or part-time University faculty member at the Stockton Center has working space available for the semester, access to a computer, photocopier, audio-visual/classroom equipment, Internet and email access, library, and computer lab access. Travel reimbursements are available for full-time Turlock-based faculty traveling to and from the Stockton Center.

ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT FOR SUPPORT OF TEACHING

In addition to funding resources, faculty members at CSU Stanislaus have a range of services and resources available to support them in their teaching. Two of the most important services are the Library and the Office of Information Technology, discussed in Thematic Essay Two. Library faculty members support their peer instructional faculty as a reference resource in teaching and research, with services offered at both the Turlock and Stockton campuses.

The University Library involves discipline-based faculty in library collection development in order to ensure the timeliness and viability of library resources. When new programs are approved and funding is distributed to the colleges, the Library has not always been included to receive a portion of the budget for new acquisitions to support the program. To address this oversight, efforts have been made to include the Library at the planning and implementation stages of new program development. For example, the new Ed. D. program, approved in 2008, included an external analysis of information needs and incorporated these data into the fee structure of this self-supporting program.

Support provided by the Office of Information Technology includes technical support for computer equipment used by faculty for their teaching and scholarship activities, educational broadcast systems, on-line teaching, media equipment and materials, and videotaping services. In addition, the Faculty Multimedia Laboratory, located in the Faculty Development Center, assists faculty with the technological aspects of the systematic design, development, and application of multimedia, computing, and traditional media into curriculum and teaching.

3. SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A DIVERSE FACULTY

The development and maintenance of a diverse faculty of teacher-scholars includes recruitment activities, the development of faculty members as professional scholars and teachers, and rewarding teacher-scholars for their achievements.

RECRUITING FACULTY

As expressed in the CSU Stanislaus *Faculty Recruitment and Appointment Manual* (2007), the recruitment of a well-qualified, diverse faculty is a strategic priority on campus. The University encourages applications and nominations of women, persons of color, persons with disabilities, and members of underrepresented groups. As noted in the Introductory Essay, efforts are underway to increase the number of underrepresented faculty over the next decade.

Accordingly, the Office of Faculty Affairs has established procedures for search committees that inform committee members on issues of ethnic/gender representation, statistical comparisons with student demographics, and state/national demographics. An advisory panel established by the President in 2005 led to the creation of a faculty diversity committee in 2007 charged with developing recommendations and promoting processes that enhance the recruitment, retention, and promotion of faculty who support the University's mission and vision regarding diversity.

RETAINING, DEVELOPING, AND REWARDING FACULTY

Once new faculty members are recruited, they are welcomed to the campus by members of the Faculty Development Committee and the staff of the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (FCETL) that hosts a two-day New Faculty Orientation to acclimate them to the campus. The FCETL also hosts a welcoming dinner for all first and second-year faculty and their

families. The FCETL provides new faculty with the *Faculty Survival Guide*, in its eighth year of publication. This resource provides more than eighty pages of advice, policies, resources, and a plethora of valuable information for the new members of our campus community. The FCETL sponsors a new-faculty mentor program and has recently developed a series of workshops for first-year faculty. A broadly observed practice of assigning a reduced teaching load to first year faculty aids in recruitment and is much appreciated by new hires.

In addition to the FCETL, there are numerous infrastructural entities that support and reward the professional development of the faculty. These offices include the offices of Faculty Affairs, Research and Sponsored Programs, International Education, Service Learning, and committees such as the Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Policy Committee, the Faculty Development Committee, and the Leaves and Awards Committee. In addition to external funding for research or teaching grants, campus and CSU-sponsored grants, travel funds, and sabbaticals are available. University-wide recognition includes two awards for teaching – Outstanding Professor of the Year and the Elizabeth Anne B. Papageorge Faculty Development Award – and awards for Outstanding Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Professor, and Outstanding Community Service Professor.

The overall primacy of teaching excellence is reflected in all policies and publications of the University and in the Retention, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) process. For retention, promotion, and tenure at CSU Stanislaus, faculty members submit materials demonstrating appropriate academic credentials and excellence in three areas: teaching; research, scholarship, and creative activity; and service to the University and community. As part of their RPT portfolio, faculty members often include teaching philosophies as a reflection of their commitment to the successful engagement of students and continual improvement of student learning; these statements are being collected for campus dissemination. Faculty are aided and supported in the RPT process by a series of workshops and by specific guidelines provided by the University regarding expectations in teaching, scholarship, and service. A pre-tenure annual review process is helpful to new faculty in clarifying expectations. While all departments require specific guidelines – called “elaborations” – regarding research, scholarship, and creative activity (discussed in Thematic Essay Four), not all require elaborations for teaching. The University RPT Committee has encouraged all departments to address the expectations in teaching in as much detail as they do for research, scholarship and creative activity.

4. HOW TEACHING SUPPORTS STUDENT LEARNING

The University relies on several well-established data-gathering activities to assess the quality of teaching and student learning. The primary instrument for student evaluation of faculty performance is the *Individual Development and Educational Assessment* (IDEA) form, a nationally recognized assessment administered by Kansas State University. Faculty members are required to administer this instrument in at least two courses annually and to discuss the results of these evaluations within the narrative of their retention, promotion, and tenure reports. Faculty members also use these data for improving teaching effectiveness. The full IDEA form includes data on teaching methods, pedagogical strategies, and learning goals. To help examine the relationship between teaching and learning on our campus, aggregate data from the IDEA process across campus will be analyzed in the next phase of the self study and discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

As part of the Retention, Promotion, and Tenure process and for the evaluation of lecturers, many departments use peer observations of in-class teaching to evaluate teaching techniques and effectiveness. Many individuals and departments have created additional assessment tools to measure progress on learning outcomes, evaluate faculty, and evaluate course delivery and content. Although not normally used in the RPT process, these assessments provide valuable information for the improvement of instruction and assessment of academic programs. In addition to the above, campus exit and alumni surveys, as well as the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, provide useful indirect measures for assessing effective teaching. The results of these evaluations will be presented and discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Assessing the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process has become a campus priority over the last decade. The commitment has been manifested in the creation of the Office for the Assessment of Student Learning, the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance, the Faculty Coordinator for the Assessment of Student Learning and the Program Assessment Coordinators, which have been described in Thematic Essay Two. As highlighted in Dr. Mary Allen's 2007 evaluation of the University's assessment processes, the Faculty Coordinator and Program Assessment Coordinator positions represent an integral step in having faculty members lead the design and execution of assessment of student learning on campus. Dr. Allen also noted the importance of faculty developing internal expertise in assessment and administration rewarding and recognizing faculty for their assessment efforts. The role of assessment as scholarship and professional development will be explored in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In a learning-centered institution such as CSU Stanislaus, scholarship is related, either directly or indirectly, to student learning. Ernest Boyer (1990) described the scholarship of teaching as one of four types of scholarship, along with those of discovery, integration, and application. At CSU Stanislaus, the scholarship of teaching is manifested through studying innovative teaching practices, examining new ways of engaging students in learning, reflecting on teaching and assessment practices, and assessing their impact on student learning. The scholarship of teaching at CSU Stanislaus also is manifested through joint faculty-student scholarship, the integration of research into classroom curricula, and faculty reflections on pedagogical approaches and best-practices forums.

Discussions of the relationship between scholarship and learning are ongoing, ranging from informal lunchtime conversations among faculty to departmental meetings, formal campus-wide workshops, and publications on the scholarship of teaching and learning. Since 2002, the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has sponsored a yearly publication, *Faculty Voices*, an anthology of faculty discussions of teaching and learning. These discussions are published after a yearlong process of shared development and refinement. The process serves the dual purpose of engaging our community of teacher-scholars and contributing to on-going discussion of teaching and learning by the campus community. This topic will be discussed further in the following essay, which relates to research, scholarship, and creative activity.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence provided in this essay demonstrates the University's capacity to recruit, support, and retain a community of teacher-scholars. The notion and practice of teacher-scholarship has

begun to take root in the campus culture. A variety of support and administrative offices supports the work of faculty in meeting the teaching mission of the University. A wide range of activities supports the professional development and improvement of individual faculty members. Our campus processes identify areas in which improvement can be made, and several actions are under way to increase our capacity to assess our effectiveness. These actions will be evaluated and discussed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

The evolving definitions and assessments of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity at CSU Stanislaus depend increasingly on the better understanding and application of the various definitions of scholarship, including that of teaching and learning. The following essay focuses on the definitions and roles of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity on our campus and explores some of the topics relating to the interaction among teaching, research, scholarship, and student learning.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

THEMATIC ESSAY FOUR THE ROLE OF RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RSCA)

Inquiry Question Four: How effectively does the University support Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA), appropriate to its mission?

INTRODUCTION

Excellence in teaching remains preeminent in the University's mission. At the same time, faculty vitality and pedagogical advances are dependent upon the University's ability to support faculty scholarly endeavors, defined at CSU Stanislaus as inclusive of research, scholarship, and creative activity (henceforth RSCA). This essay examines evidence of the capacity of CSU Stanislaus to support RSCA appropriate to its mission of "promoting academic excellence in the teaching and scholarly activities of our faculty."

To guide the inquiry, the RSCA Inquiry Circle developed four researchable questions.

1. *How clearly does the University define research, scholarship, and creative activities within the mission of the University as a learning-centered institution?*
2. *How effectively does the University value, recognize, and reward RSCA?*
3. *How effectively does the University support RSCA in terms of infrastructure, scheduling, funding, access to materials, the library, and technological support?*
4. *How does RSCA inform and improve the teaching and learning process?*

Institutional capacity for RSCA was evaluated in terms of the development of policies, practices, infrastructural support, and fiscal investment over the last decade. This evaluation affirms the University capacity to support, value, recognize, and reward faculty RSCA. In keeping with its learning-centered mission, University capacity for RSCA informs the teaching and learning process.

1. DEFINING RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

The definition of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity at CSU Stanislaus is based upon three general rubrics: 1) the University Mission, 2) the departmental "elaborations" that specify criteria for retention, promotion, and tenure decision-making, and 3) campus compliance with national standards.

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY DEFINED WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION

To fulfill the mission of the University "to encourage all members of the campus community to expand their intellectual, creative, and social horizons," CSU Stanislaus promotes academic excellence in teaching as well as the scholarly activities of our faculty. Creating clear definitions of the terms "research, scholarship, and creative activity" has been a priority for faculty and administrators for two decades. In the mid-nineties, the Academic Senate formed an *ad hoc* research, scholarship, and creative activity task force that produced recommendations concerning definitions and actions to enhance support for RSCA, addressing retention, promotion, and tenure processes, institutional funding, and infrastructural support. As a result of those deliberations, in 2000 the Academic Senate approved Resolution 18/AS/00/RSCAPC, a broad working definition of research, and placed the responsibility of defining and interpreting RSCA on the individual academic departments, as shown in Figure Three.

FIGURE THREE: DEFINING RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

DEFINITION
“Research, scholarship, and creative activity are considered to be those activities of an intellectual or professional nature which extend knowledge, understanding, or appreciation of work within one’s own discipline or across disciplines, which include basic and applied investigation, as well as production or creative works.” 18/AS/00/RSCAPC

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY DEFINED BY DEPARTMENTS

As the University-wide definition of research, scholarship, and creative activity is very broad, each department is charged with elaborating upon the definitions by describing specific expectations relevant to the academic discipline. Once approved by the University Retention, Promotion, and Tenure Committee, departmental elaborations guide personnel decisions made by all levels of review: the department committees, the deans, the University-wide committee, the provost, and the president.

Data reflect that faculty in all 29 departments, the library, and counseling units have created elaborations for scholarship. Of these, 88% link scholarly elaborations to teaching effectiveness; often the two overlap, reflecting the link between scholarship and instruction. Elaborations across the disciplines generally reflect the traditions of the academy: publications and public exhibitions, performances, grants, presentations of professional papers, and discipline-related workshops. Increasingly, many elaborations illustrate advances in scholarship in emerging fields of inquiry such as academic technology, service learning, innovative pedagogy, global and international learning, cross-cultural diversity, and interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research. One benefit of the elaboration process is that it centers the decision-making on faculty members within each department. In the broader context of the University, elaborations provide the opportunity for faculty and administrators better to understand diverse perspectives on scholarship within and across disciplines. The discussion is ongoing: in November of 2007, for example, the provost and Speaker of Faculty co-sponsored an open forum on the topic in which more than 70 faculty members from all six colleges participated.

RESEARCH DEFINED THROUGH CAMPUS COMPLIANCE POLICIES

While departmental elaborations reflect the diverse definitions of research and scholarship pertaining to faculty retention, promotion, and tenure, faculty committees remain sensitive and responsive to maintaining a consistent definition of “research” throughout the University’s compliance-based policies. At CSU Stanislaus, research activities that undermine the integrity of scholarly activity are viewed as serious infractions of the academy’s values. Over the past several years, the University has updated the definition of research and its policies related to Human Subjects Research, Research Misconduct, Conflict of Interest, and Intellectual Property Rights.

2. VALUING, RECOGNIZING, AND REWARDING RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

The retention, promotion, and tenure process is the primary vehicle for the recognition and reward of research, scholarship, and creative activity among tenurable faculty. However, several additional University mechanisms value, recognize, and reward RSCA for all faculty members. One of these is an annual award for “Outstanding RSCA Professor of the Year.” Others include *The Research Compendium*, *The Journal of Research*, Honor Societies, and RSCA Grants.

THE RESEARCH COMPENDIUM

Although lists of faculty RSCA have been collected by college deans since 1998, a comprehensive list communicated campus-wide began only in 2006 with the publication of an annual *Research Compendium*, a consolidation of the RSCA conducted in each college and the Library. This publication provides a vehicle for the public recognition of faculty accomplishments and is used in fundraising, grants, and accreditation efforts. The *Compendium* is organized into twenty-seven categories consistent with the broad, inclusive definitions of research across the disciplines, including student research categories. This data source will be analyzed and evaluated in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

JOURNAL OF RESEARCH

From 1996 to 2003, the *CSU Stanislaus Journal of Research* was published as a means to showcase outstanding research across the disciplines. This journal was discontinued because of severe state budget reductions. The provost has provided seed funding for a new RSCA publication to celebrate the research and creative accomplishments of both our faculty and students and to highlight the variety of academic activities that enrich the learning environment in the University. It will also showcase those activities that provide important services to the region and state through applied research and community engagement. This publication will draw from the diverse range of research and sponsored projects supported by internal and external sources across CSU Stanislaus and will hopefully serve as a catalyst for a culture of dynamic interaction among teaching, research, and service.

HONOR SOCIETIES

Another important vehicle for recognizing RSCA is the campus chapter of the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, an international interdisciplinary society devoted to faculty and student scholarly achievements. In 1998, CSU Stanislaus sought membership in this national society as a means to elevate its scholarly culture and to honor outstanding disciplinary and interdisciplinary RSCA. The process for a campus-based chapter is highly competitive, analogous to a comprehensive reaccreditation self study and site visit. Of sixty-one campus applications in 1999, CSU Stanislaus was the only chapter to be approved, testimony to the quality of its commitment to fostering, supporting, and honoring research of its faculty and students. Since its installation in 1999, approximately 400 students and 70 faculty members have been inducted in or have transferred their memberships to the local chapter. CSU Stanislaus also holds membership in 11 disciplinary-based honor societies that collectively honor outstanding faculty and student scholarly achievement.

FACULTY RSCA GRANTS

The Faculty RSCA Grants program offers mini-grants to faculty, frequently for projects involving students and related to curricular improvement. All faculty members are eligible, including part-time and full-time lecturers, thus promoting their inclusion and integration into the campus life. RSCA grant funding for 2007-08 was approximately \$125,000, awarded to more than fifty-one faculty recipients, with awards ranging from \$640 to \$5,000. More than a third of these grants were awarded to faculty with fewer than four years on campus, 66% to assistant and associate professors, recognizing that new, often junior, faculty members are to be supported as much as possible in their RSCA development. For 2007-08, all lecturer applicants for RSCA grants were awarded: evidence of attempts to recognize the RSCA achievements of non-tenure-track faculty.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

The University supports the research, scholarship, and creative activities of its faculty through the efforts of a variety of offices and governance committees.

FACULTY GOVERNANCE: RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY POLICY COMMITTEE

The Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Policy Committee (RSCAPC), formed in 1999, is composed of 13 faculty and administrators. It recommends research, scholarship, and creative activity policy to the Academic Senate, coordinates the promotion and support of research, scholarship, and creative activity for undergraduate and graduate students, and recommends mechanisms for recognizing research, scholarship, and creative activities. The committee formulates standards, guidelines, and procedures to protect students and faculty involved in research and to allow RSCA to be conducted within established compliance parameters. Within the past several years, the committee has revised several policies to ensure support to faculty, students, staff and administrators in effectively securing and conducting research with internal and external funding sources. The committee is currently working with the administration to take steps to improve the process by which financial services are provided to grants and contracts.

FACULTY GOVERNANCE: UNIVERSITY RETENTION, PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE

The University Retention, Promotion, and Tenure Committee (URPTC), a permanent committee of the General Faculty, is charged with reviewing departmental recommendations concerning retention, promotion, and tenure of faculty and is responsible for the review and approval of departmental elaborations. The committee, made up of seven senior faculty members from across the disciplines, has been proactive in the last few years in urging departments to revise and update their elaborations in regards to RSCA. In spring 2007, the committee chair requested departments to review their elaborations, emphasizing the importance of addressing RSCA opportunities that currently might not be addressed such as efforts toward globalizing the curriculum, publications related to accreditation, service learning and outreach, and development of courses for online delivery. In 2007, the URPTC requested that Academic Senate establish an *ad hoc* committee to examine practices at other universities and recommend ways to streamline and improve the RPT process. That committee was formed in 2008 and works under the guidance of the Faculty Affairs Committee.

FACULTY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (FCETL) sponsors an Instructional Institute Day, annual faculty development mini-grants, and hosts a biennial *Empire and Imperial Cultures Conference* that brings together CSU Stanislaus faculty, students, and scholars from around the world to share research and further enhance the teaching and learning experience of our students. For the past three years, the FCETL has sponsored a writing group to strengthen faculty research endeavors by providing bi-weekly sessions in which drafts of scholarly work are shared and feedback is provided. The FCETL also sponsors the Faculty Lecture Series, bringing wider university recognition to our scholars.

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) works in close cooperation with faculty governance and the Divisions of University Advancement and Business and Finance to support faculty and student research sponsored by external granting agencies. Faculty principal investigators assessed the quality of support from this office, resulting in the development of a strategic planning process and several other improvements to address concerns arising from this review. In particular, the University consolidated several functions within the office, including assigning three full-time grant accountants, streamlining and clarifying grant accounting procedures, and reassigning compliance issues to a full-time compliance officer. These changes allow ORSP staff to focus more intently on faculty development and expanded extramural funding.

From a half-time director in 1999 to its current configuration of an Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs assisted by four full-time pre-and post-award staff and three full-time grant accountants for faculty and students, the University thus has increased significantly its capacity to support faculty RSCA, often resulting in research assigned-time for the faculty member involved. ORSP support includes the location, preparation, and submission of grant applications and the administration of research grant awards. With ORSP assistance, faculty members already involved in research have improved their funding success. The ratio of submitted to awarded proposals has increased steadily during the past 10 years, although the number of faculty members applying for grants has remained about the same during that time. As a result of the investment of increased personnel and staffing capacity, the pledged amount on external grants at CSU Stanislaus has increased from under \$5 million to over \$22 million in just the last five years. As part of its Strategic Plan for Sponsored Research, ORSP is working to ensure a larger percentage of the faculty and students successfully garner extra-mural funding.

When awarded grants allow for indirect cost recovery, established campus policy and procedures govern the allocation of indirect costs revenue. This policy was revised in 1999 to reflect a more generous distribution of funding (65%) to the faculty principal investigators, their departments, and their colleges. Prior to this policy, only 10% was distributed to Academic Affairs for this purpose. Over the past decade, this allocation formula has substantially increased the capacity of faculty for scholarly research and professional development and has allowed for ORSP to continue building an infrastructure in support of faculty in their grant development. Progress on issues and concerns with grant funding will be addressed in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

The University's centers and institutes are organizational units that support faculty and student research. These units increase the University's capacity in terms of competitiveness of extra-mural proposals for securing external funding. For example, subject matter institutes for P-12 teachers are offered by faculty from education, arts, foreign languages, English, mathematics, and sciences. Other examples include the Centers for Direct Instruction, Public Policy Studies, Behavior Intervention Services, Economic Education, the Child Development Center, and the Institute for Cultural Resources. Through the Office of International Education, the University supports RSCA through its Study Abroad Programs, by hosting Fulbright Scholars in Residence within various academic departments, and by offering faculty development scholarships for winter and summer study in other countries. The Office also supports faculty in pursuing the development of global learning as part of their retention, promotion, and tenure process.

SPACE FOR RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Given state regulations, CSU funding processes do not provide for specialized or dedicated research space. For the sciences and the arts in particular, laboratory and performance space and specialized equipment is required for the conduct of faculty's scholarship. This is an area of development that the University has begun to explore through University Advancement. Nonetheless, faculty members have continued to engage in such activities through the creative use of instructional space at those times courses are not in session.

FACULTY SABBATICALS

Over the past decade, 152 faculty members applied for a one-semester sabbatical and 117 (77%) were granted. An average of nine funded sabbaticals have been awarded per year over the past decade; others

have received sabbaticals that were not funded but supported by teaching overloads in the departments. Data indicate that in some years there have been fewer applications than potentially funded sabbaticals. This disparity may result from the general perception that smaller departments are unable to award sabbaticals to faculty because they do not have sufficient faculty to cover required courses, and part-time faculty with sufficient qualifications are not available. The current collective bargaining agreement requires the availability of a minimum of 17 funded sabbatical awards. Faculty Affairs, working with the RSCAPC and the provost, is currently addressing this new policy.

COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT SUPPORT

Start-up support for new tenurable faculty, normally includes a two-course teaching load reduction for the first year (one course each semester), a new desktop or laptop computer (sometimes both), and partial reimbursement for moving expenses. The reduced load is intended to allow faculty members to develop their RSCA agenda and curricular contributions. One example of a successful model for RSCA support among the University, college, and department levels is through the new faculty research grants offered in the Department of Biological Sciences. Funding for these research start-up grants is generated from the University's indirect costs received from external research grants. The Department of Biological Sciences has implemented a start-up research package of up to \$10,000 for each new faculty member with its portion of indirect costs received. In addition, the College of Natural Sciences awarded 13 faculty members with Naraghi Faculty Research Grant Awards to enhance their work in 2008.

ACCESS TO MATERIALS THROUGH THE LIBRARY AND TECHNOLOGY

Faculty members are supported in research, scholarship, and creative activities through access to library acquisitions and collections, Interlibrary Loan, and the Library faculty. Through research and reference services, including Interlibrary Loan, Library faculty members are able to note the strengths, quality, and balance of collections, a necessity for faculty and student research.

Technology has accelerated research and writing processes, enabling scholars to conduct research in ways unimaginable a decade ago. Technological interfaces to discipline-specific databases are frequently updated, and online journal and research collection acquisition is expanding. Web-based Library resources are accessible on- and off-campus. This off-campus service is crucial for faculty and student research conducted outside of the academic year or during a sabbatical. Investing in an expansion of technologies, especially fully researchable digital journals, is a capacity investment currently underway within fiscal constraints. The strategy to improve library support for RSCA is twofold: augmenting library collections and developing technological capabilities. The CSU Council of Library Directors has agreed in principle to leverage system-wide buying power in order to augment local collections with electronic information resources that would be available to faculty and students on all 23 campuses. The Library will also participate in consortia that expand access to research collections in other academic libraries.

CSU PROVOSTS' SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

The CSU system is committed to valuing, recognizing, and rewarding research, scholarship, and creative activity. In April 2007, the CSU Academic Council adopted the *Provosts' Role in Research in the CSU*, affirming the role of research, scholarship, and creative activities as "integral to the mission of each university within the system." This statement notes that over the last decade these activities have increased throughout the CSU system, "not at the expense of its educational mission, but in support of it." CSU provosts noted that faculty research enhances student learning, that students have greater success if actively involved in research, that research brings external support, that support for research

helps the CSU to compete for quality faculty, and that the growth in applied research serves industry and government. Among the recommendations the provosts made were to expand resources and infrastructure to support research, to examine RSCA expectations in light of the teacher-scholar model, to articulate the benefits of RSCA to stakeholders, and to develop effective incentives for student involvement in RSCA.

4. INFORMING AND IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity directly impact the quality of teaching and learning. First and foremost, the quality of a student's educational experience directly correlates to the currency and depth of faculty knowledge, regardless of whether the individual course is the topic of their specialization or current research project.

The quantity and quality of RSCA at CSU Stanislaus have increased dramatically over the last decade, with a noticeable trend in many departments toward the encouragement and support of pedagogically related research, in addition to more traditional basic and applied research. On a recent (2007) campus-wide faculty survey, over 60% of faculty respondents stated that they consistently or frequently incorporate their research into classroom instruction. Examples include the use of personal presentations or projects as course materials or examples of field research, use of authored textbooks in the classroom, use of research materials for course bibliography, and involvement of students in research. Analyses of student research undertaken as part of recent surveys (including NSSE and FSSE) underscored the linkage among faculty research, faculty use of research in their courses, and faculty expectations for students' research. Also, a new category of the 2006-07 *Research Compendium* addresses faculty and student collaborative research. Results of these efforts will inform the evaluations made in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

CSU Stanislaus is an Hispanic-Serving Institution, as designated by the U.S. Department of Education, and qualifies for select federal programs aimed at increasing participation in RSCA by traditionally underrepresented students, especially those in the sciences and professions. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has placed a priority on securing HSI funding for collaborative student and faculty research. This office is at the forefront of addressing regional and national educational diversity issues, taking the institutional lead in applying for grants that support minority participation from agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION

Capacity to support joint student and faculty research is evidenced through the campus and system-wide annual Student Research Competition. Funding for student cash awards is supported at both levels, and over a five-year period, student and faculty mentor participation has increased 400% and nearly doubled the number of CSU Stanislaus students advancing to the system-wide competition. Travel-related expenses are provided for students and their faculty mentors who advance to the system-wide event. This successful collaborative program between students and faculty links directly to the classroom: evidence of improved teaching and learning through the RSCA process. Several baccalaureate programs, such as the Honors Program, emphasize collaborative research between faculty and students as an important component of their programs.

GRADUATE RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Graduate education at CSU Stanislaus prepares students for career advancement, entry into professions, and possible doctoral study. In 2007, about 22% of the University's students were graduate and post-baccalaureate students, and 174 faculty members taught graduate courses. With regard to the preeminent role of RSCA in graduate education, the Graduate Council has recommended policy and procedures that have increased fiscal support incrementally over the past few years, primarily through graduate fee waivers, continuing enrollment fee reductions, graduate teaching assistantships funded by private donors, distribution of grants and indirect cost recovery, and University open-enrollment fees.

An analysis of the student learning goals of each of the 23 master's programs verifies that each has at least one learning outcome related to the demonstration of research, scholarship, and creative activity and has multiple methods in place for the assessment of these learning outcomes. Eighty-six percent of the graduate programs require either a research thesis or graduate project. During the past two years, 583 theses produced by graduate students attest to this original research. The Graduate Council continues to work with the University's administration to increase fiscal support for research through increased funding for graduate and research assistantships.

An example of increasing capacity for research through funded grants that impacts the quality of instruction for diverse students through pedagogical research is the U.S. Department of Education's "Improving Teacher Quality" grant. Awarded to the College of Education, teacher education faculty partner with researchers at the UC Berkeley's Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE). The grant creates a collaborative mechanism for college faculty and local teachers to develop a research-based approach to the education of student teachers. This research has a direct impact on improving the classroom teaching and learning process for CSU Stanislaus students.

CONCLUSIONS

Data indicate that over the past decade, CSU Stanislaus has significantly improved its definitions and policies regarding RSCA, has created processes for recognizing and rewarding RSCA, has expanded infrastructural support, has increased fiscal support, and has encouraged student and faculty research in order to enhance the teaching and learning process.

Overall, RSCA capacity can be considered high for the infrastructural criterion; however, fiscal investment is not at the level desired by the faculty or the administration. Even though RSCA is clearly embedded in the values, mission, culture, policies, and infrastructure at CSU Stanislaus, the amount of time faculty members are able to devote to RSCA, given the constraints of the faculty contract, remains an issue. As was apparent in the 2007 open forum on RSCA, broad consensus exists that teaching loads of seven or eight classes per year inhibit the ability of faculty members to devote adequate time to RSCA and other professional development responsibilities. Multiple faculty governance and administrative entities are currently addressing this topic.

Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities are an integral part of the institutional identity of CSU Stanislaus and a major component of the professional lives of our community of teacher-scholars. The recently approved *Strategic Plan*, which guides campus actions for the next five years, focuses on supporting RSCA seed funding, promoting and publicizing accomplishments and achievements, and implementing the faculty workload agreement. These activities are integrally related to faculty professional development, the enhancement of teaching and, ultimately, the enhancement of the quality of student learning. In order to sustain an increase in capacity for support and innovation in RSCA, the

University community will have to think and act in collaborative and strategic ways, given the prognosis that the CSU will face a difficult budgetary future of increased needs with diminishing resources.

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**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW**

**INTEGRATIVE ESSAY
INQUIRY AND REFLECTION**

This Integrative Essay summarizes the University's progress in response to the major recommendations made by the WASC Commission in 1999. At this midpoint of the re-accreditation cycle, the essay also integrates the four themes of the self study, reflecting on the process itself and anticipating its implications for the future, and concludes with a review of outcomes met for the capacity stage and progress already made for the effectiveness stage.

PROGRESS SINCE THE 1998 REVIEW

CSU Stanislaus has addressed the three principal recommendations made as a result of the WASC Commission review of the 1996-98 self study and has implemented improvements in each area throughout the past ten years. Specifically, the University has refined and institutionalized effectiveness strategies, including the management of data, the use of data in academic program review processes and strategic planning, and the use of appropriate forms of assessment to improve and enhance student learning. Likewise, the University has a more clearly defined collective definition of research, scholarship, and creative activity that honors disciplinary perspectives. The University has embedded these scholarly expectations into its faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion processes and has increased institutional support for faculty scholarship. The University has taken actions to enhance the Library as a learning resource by implementing a strategic plan that advances student success and faculty scholarship and that responds creatively to a changing environment characterized by a predominance of electronic communication and information exchange. A detailed description of these actions may be found in *Appendix X: Response to Previous Commission Concerns*.

REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The *Institutional Proposal* identifies a method for our theme-based study in the creation and use of Inquiry Circles. These Circles conduct the study through their intramural practice and their consultation with and advisement to governance committees, and through their serious, collegial engagement with the terms, issues, and data of the study. The two themes – Communities for Learning, and Communities for Teaching and Scholarship – were examined by two Inquiry Circles each, whose work informed the four thematic essays comprising the body of this report.

The Inquiry Circles make several observations for the continued refinement of campus knowledge of and support for learning, engagement, and diversity and for the refinement of faculty development and roles. These observations are posted in the form of suggestions on the appropriate Inquiry Circle web site and include various enhancements aimed at promoting and recognizing engagement in learning and engagement practices, updating critical support unit plans, and further refining data collection and dissemination practices. Other suggestions include enhancements of methods used to improve teaching and learning, the pre-and post-award management process for grants and contracts, and reward and support processes. These suggestions to campus groups are refinements of systems already established and, hence, are not elaborated in this report. Actions resulting from these observations are tracked on the appropriate Inquiry Circle web site.

The work of the Inquiry Circles underscores several values held in common throughout the University. Through the inquiry process, the Inquiry Circles themselves have become learning communities. The review model created by the Self-Study Team is widely participatory, evidence-based, intellectually stimulating, and meaningful to the campus. While the formal Inquiry Circle structure will be dissolved following the completion of the re-affirmation of accreditation review cycle, the University fully expects that the liaisons, networks, and friendships developed during the self study will continue to inform campus practices. The Inquiry Circle process can serve as a model for future intramural organizing that works in parallel to, not in lieu of, established campus governance procedures to support the University's capacity to maintain an organization committed to learning and improvement.

While the four inquiry questions are presented as discrete entities for the convenience of organizing the inquiry and self study report, the University recognizes the inextricable connections among support for student learning, engagement, teaching and scholarship. Through this prism, the inquiry process discovered several issues that transcend each inquiry and accumulate within larger areas of importance. The issues outlined below describe – in broad strokes – the potential impact of the work of the self study as it prepares for the next phase. These issues will form a focus of the Educational Effectiveness Review, as they will for the direction the study might indicate for the future of the institution.

Within the theme of Communities for Learning, Thematic Essay One addresses engagement and learning for a diverse student population, specifically examining the ways diversity and engagement are defined in practice and the processes that promote opportunities for the assessment and enhancement of student learning. Similarly, Thematic Essay Two addresses University infrastructure in support of student learning and engagement, specifically examining the Library, technological resources, student support services, and assessment practices.

As Thematic Essays One and Two demonstrate, the University has the capacity to support curricular development and to assess the quality of student learning. Numerous interdisciplinary programs – including approaches to general education – and student services attest to the ability of the University to tailor pedagogy and support programs to the unique needs of its students. However, the relationship of these programs to the central University commitment to liberal learning is far from secure. This issue is certainly not unique to CSU Stanislaus but is part of a national trend reexamining the priorities and outcomes of general education curricula. Moreover, while the faculty have sharpened the practice of assessment of student learning to enhance program development, with meaningful results, the assessment of the general education program has lagged behind. Dr. Mary Allen's 2007 report, generally very positive about the state of assessment at CSU Stanislaus, emphasizes the need for the acceleration of authentic assessment of the general education program.

This national trend dovetails with local concern as expressed in the first two action items of the *Strategic Plan* that affirms our commitment to our traditional liberal arts curriculum as the University expands its repertoire of professional and pre-professional programs in response to community needs. Through its general education program, the University retains its commitment to liberal learning and grounds its forays into professional and pre-professional education. Several opportunities exist for the renewal of liberal learning to allow increased predictability and enhanced student learning by making its goals and outcomes less complicated and more reliable. For example, the new six-college structure encourages the colleges to develop their own localized approaches to curriculum and scholarship and can form a platform for development and regeneration. Revitalizing University commitment to liberal education poses great challenge, but even greater rewards.

Within the theme of “Communities for Teaching and Scholarship,” Thematic Essay Three addresses support to our faculty, specifically examining how a sense of a community of teacher-scholars is created and maintained through recruiting, rewarding, and retaining quality faculty members. It also explores how the University infrastructure facilitates teaching in support of student learning and concludes with an exploration of the impact of research and scholarship on teaching and learning. Following on this topic, Thematic Essay Four addresses the changing role of research, scholarship, and creative activities within the University mission, specifically examining definitions and systems for the infrastructural support, recognition, and reward of these activities. As both Circles emphasize, research, scholarship, and creative activity are integral components of CSU faculty identity as teacher-scholars.

As thematic Essays Three and Four demonstrate, the University has the capacity to support teaching and research scholarship. CSU Stanislaus has a tradition of emphasis on the quality of teaching for a diverse and predominately first-generation student body. Institutional investment in the promotion of teaching effectiveness is most evident in the value systems that place the highest weight on teaching proficiency in the tenure and promotion processes. The great investments in the physical site and programming for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning also attest to this valuation. At the same time, the University’s ability to gauge the quality of teaching effectiveness is a complex, often difficult task. The next phase of the inquiry will examine how well our teaching supports student learning and how the University more effectively can increase its support for faculty professional development related to teaching proficiency and the promotion of student learning.

Although infrastructural support has expanded over the last decade, levels and direction of future investment will be affected by the demands placed upon it by a growing professoriate increasingly sophisticated in research and scholarly expectations. For example, the self study finds that the Library is very good at supporting the teaching needs of faculty and the needs of students within curricular limits and does so through extraordinary measures of time and dedication. However, the University will need a revised strategy for the Library – currently stretched to its limit – to address its research capacity. A similar condition exists with research facilities for the arts, sciences, social sciences, and applied sciences due to state restrictions on the funding of such facilities. Although faculty are applauded for their ingenuity and resourcefulness, the needs of faculty engaged in research is a growing issue, particularly as these needs confront the ongoing demand for increased classroom space. In addition, while improvements have been made with regard to the clarity and expansion of research definitions, the criteria for judging the amount and quality of scholarly accomplishments requires increased attention. The Educational Effectiveness Review is an opportunity for meaningful discussion of the best ways the University can provide even greater specificity of expectations to the reward processes.

Given the interplay between teaching and research, and with a new generation of ascendant faculty dedicated to teaching excellence with increasing expectations for university support of their scholarship, the question emerges whether the University can commit itself simultaneously to extensive engagement with students in the classroom and on campus and to equally intensive engagement in the serious, reflective work of research and scholarship. The demands of each pursuit in terms of financial, material, and administrative support – and in terms simply of time – routinely test the flexibility and elasticity of University faculty, staff, and administrative personnel. This constriction includes the physical and infrastructural ability of the University to support research and scholarship above and beyond that support for the teaching mission we currently provide, as well as for the continuing student growth we envision. As the research and teaching demands of the University expand – for faculty members and

administrators alike – the related issue of the appropriate investment and deployment of resources are central elements of our commitment to teacher scholars. These issues are indicated in the new direction the University charts in its *Strategic Plan*, they have central bearing on how the University develops and budgets its curricula, and they reflect widespread and documented faculty and staff concern. While these areas have been discussed throughout this report in terms of capacity, the next phase of the self study allows an opportunity to examine them in detail in terms of effectiveness.

CAPACITY OUTCOMES AND PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT PHASE

Our *Institutional Proposal* focuses the work of the self study through the prism of engagement and learning and identifies six major outcomes for the Capacity and Preparatory Review. Through an examination of multiple evidence sources, CSU Stanislaus has demonstrated its core commitment to capacity. The University has developed an adequate Institutional Research infrastructure and service delivery and has refined institutional capacity and organizational structures and systems for quality assurance. The University has enhanced support and systems for faculty development and refined critical infrastructural support of teaching and learning by the Library and information technology. Finally, the University has increased capacity in areas identified by faculty governance and administration and has addressed issues raised by the Inquiry Circles in the course of their work. These outcomes were met, as detailed throughout this report and enumerated in [Appendix X](#), *Outcomes for the Capacity and Preparatory Review*.

Progress already is being made on each of the intended outcomes for the Educational Effectiveness Review. University commitment to educational effectiveness is demonstrated through the implementation and enhancement of internal assessment processes in undergraduate, graduate, and co-curricular programs. The University has taken action to understand more fully the diversity of the entire campus community and to celebrate and promote those practices that enhance it. The self study underscores the appreciation of elements of diversity, especially those elements related to students and the ways in which the faculty are effective in teaching a diverse student population. In the Educational Effectiveness Review, we will continue to explore how well students learn about diversity from curricular and co-curricular activities.

We conclude the capacity and preparatory stage of our assessment satisfied with the utility of our model and eager to frame the next stage of our self study through the four Inquiry Questions, having ascertained that they remain cogent, researchable, and focused on student learning. Through the examination of assessment results and thoughtful consideration of evidentiary implications, we will shift our focus to educational excellence and to the future.

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIGURES, APPENDICES, AND WORK CITED

Figure One: Communities and Inquiry Questions (Introductory Essay)

Figure Two: Thematic Inquiries (Introductory Essay)

Figure Three: Definition of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (Essay Four)

Appendix X: Response to Previous Commission Concerns

Appendix X: Overview of the Self-Study Structure (to be added)

Appendix X: Outcomes for the CPR

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

APPENDIX X: RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMISSION CONCERNS

INTRODUCTION

In its letter reaffirming the accreditation of the University in 1999, the WASC Commission highlighted three areas for targeted development and improvement: Effectiveness Strategies, Faculty Roles, and the Library. Each of these areas is one of perennial concern for the University, as it is for nearly every institution of this size and at this level of development. In addition, the campus self study of 1998 identified each of these areas as an area of concern. Each of these areas was adopted within the current self study and is addressed within the body of the Capacity and Preparatory Review Report. The following tables outline the significant progress made by the University in each area.

EFFECTIVENESS STRATEGIES

The 1998 Site Visit Team recommended the implementation of the assessment-based quality assurance plan elaborated in the self study. The Commission acknowledged that campus effectiveness strategies were in the “early stages,” and specifically recommended developing “modes of assessing progress and of integrating those data into the program review process.” The Commission also endorsed the visiting team’s concern that existing “data and systems [do not] meet current needs, let alone those that will develop.”

As the current self study demonstrates throughout the report, effectiveness strategies have been woven into the very fabric of everyday life at CSU Stanislaus. The table below outlines major developments as the University continues to address this issue.

PROGRESS IN EFFECTIVENESS STRATEGIES SINCE 1998	
1999	Created Faculty Coordinator of Assessment of Student Learning position.
	Additional funding allocated for assessment training, departmental assessment plans, and the assessment coordinator.
	Refined Office of Institutional Research.
2000	Created Five-Year Assessment of Student Learning Strategic Plan.
2001	Established the Assessment of Student Learning Subcommittee.
2002	Established the Summative Teaching Assessment Practices <i>Ad Hoc</i> Committee charged with developing and implementing alternate student evaluation instruments.
	Developed the 2002-05 Assessment Initiative Plan as part of the President’s Assessment Initiative.
	Published <i>Who’s Responsible for What?</i> and <i>Ten Methods Used at CSU Stanislaus to Examine Institutional Effectiveness</i> documents.
	Piloted Academic Program Review for review in 2005.
2003	Held President’s Assessment Summit featuring Dr. Barbara Cambridge.
	Developed Assessment Action Plan to be implemented beginning fall 2005.
	Evaluated effectiveness of student services in accordance with national CAS Standards.
2004	Published <i>Principles of Assessment at CSU Stanislaus</i> .

	Established the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance, led by the Associate Vice President for Quality Assurance.
	Revised Academic Program Review process to reflect focus on student learning outcomes and use of assessment data for strategic planning.
	Defined goals of the assessment program at CSU Stanislaus.
	Held Second President's Assessment Summit featuring Dr. Barbara Cambridge.
	Engaged faculty in discussions of "culture of evidence" and increased understanding and support.
	Established Program Assessment Coordinator (PAC) positions for each department/program.
	Promoted understanding of new WASC process and standards as related to assessment and educational effectiveness.
2005	Documented accomplishments for assessment of general education learning goals (Assessment of General Education chronology) and worked with General Education subcommittee to continue progress.
	Refined graduating senior, alumni, and graduate student (master's) surveys.
	Evaluated effectiveness of budget infrastructure and allocation processes.
	Created a glossary of assessment terms for CSU Stanislaus.
	Increased support of assessment efforts by enlisting governance groups in action phases of the assessment process.
	Began conducting annual Academic Program Review workshops.
	Developed assessment-related faculty development and learning opportunities for faculty.
	Identified and secured books and newsletters related to assessment for use by campus community.
	Developed and documented organizational infrastructure and roles and responsibility for university-wide assessment.
	Updated inventory and documented learning goals for academic programs across four stages: (1) learning goals stated, (2) methods and timeline identified, (3) data collected and analyzed, (4) data used by faculty to improve programs.
	Promoted leadership and participation of students in the assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness.
	Adopted Support Unit Review process for ensuring effectiveness in administrative support units.
2006	Identified critical core indicators of quality that transcend annual goals and priorities, monitor progress, and take appropriate actions for quality improvement.
	Increased participation by a broad range of faculty in assessment development opportunities.
	Increased participation by a broad range of staff and administrators in assessment and development opportunities.
	Revised <i>Ten Methods Used at CSU Stanislaus to Examine Institutional Effectiveness</i> document.
	Implemented the Support Unit Review process- evaluating the effectiveness of administrative units.

	Incorporated student learning assessment into the Support Unit Review process.
	Developed websites for the Office of Assessment of Student Learning, the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance, General Education, and Academic Programs.
2007	Completed an external assessment by Dr. Mary Allen, national expert on student learning assessment.
	Created Faculty Director of General Education position to oversee university-level educational initiatives and programs related to the traditional General Education program, the Summit program, and the general education component of First-Year Experience in consultation with relevant faculty committees and the Vice Provost.
	Documented accomplishment of assessment of learning goals in university-wide programs such as global/international education, service learning, and honors (support unit and academic program reviews 2006-07).

FACULTY ROLES

The Commission in 1999 echoed the campus self study in urging “closure” on the issue of expectations for research, a concern raised originally in the 1990 review. The Commission also recommended aligning “review and reward systems with the needs of a learning-centered institution,” “improving support for research needs,” and generally clarifying the “definition and role of research” to alleviate “confusion and misunderstanding.” This issue is examined in exacting detail in Thematic Essay Four of the Capacity and Preparatory Review Report. The table below provides an overview of ongoing campus efforts to address this issue.

PROGRESS IN FACULTY ROLES SINCE 1998	
1998	Increased pre-award and post-award staff positions in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
	Created the Grants Incentive Program and Research Incentive Program to provide support to faculty for their Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity through the initial investment and to seek extramural funding for continuing support.
	Revised the campus policy for indirect cost recovery (Facilities & Administrative) that provides funding directly to the Principal Investigator with funded grants and some matching funds for grants.
	Provided each new faculty member with a computer for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity.
	Mandated elaborations with prime responsibility to each department for "elaborating, interpreting, and reinforcing requirements for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity."
	Deferred retention, promotion, and tenure evaluations of all new faculty until fall semester of second year of employment.
	Created the CSU Stanislaus <i>Journal of Research</i> (interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary).
1999	Increased the amount of funds for each faculty member for participation in professional activities, supplemented by the college deans in increasing amounts.
	Developed pools of modest funds in graduate studies to assist students and faculty in conducting their research.
	Increased the number of funded sabbaticals for faculty.
	Increased the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs funding for faculty sponsors to accompany student researchers to the CSU Student Research Competition.

	Enhanced financial support from the Faculty Development Committee to provide workshops related to Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity.
	Enhanced financial support for students and their faculty sponsors for the CSU Student Research Competition through Instructionally Related Activities funding.
	Created a governance structure, the Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Policy Committee, that provides leadership and advocacy for research policy, recognition, support, and resources.
2000	Defined “research” for Retention, Promotion, and Tenure purposes as “research, scholarship, and creative activity,” and empowered academic departments to elaborate this definition in discipline-specific ways.
	Established the Outstanding Faculty Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity monetary award.
	Created the Office of Service Learning in support of enhanced definition of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity and service projects.
2001	Updated Institutional Review Board policy to comply with federal regulations.
2004	Submitted initial compliance document for Executive Order 890 (Administration of Grants and Contracts in Support of Sponsored Programs) to the CSU Chancellor’s Office.
2005	Updated the Funding Success Handbook, designed to update and improve grant administration.
	Assembled a special faculty task force to identify concerns related to Intellectual Property policy updates.
	Developed a procedural guide to assist faculty in procedures for obtaining approval for and documenting the use of bio-hazardous materials on campus in compliance with <i>Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories</i> , Department of Health and Human Services.
2006	Established a complete written policy and compliance directives for administration of Sponsored Programs in accordance with CSU Executive Order 890, Sponsored Programs Administration.
	Updated Institutional Review Board policy to comply with new federal developments in Human Subjects Research and provide more detailed, navigable information to faculty and students in gaining approvals.
2007	Amended the Institutional Review Board policy to reflect federal definitions of human subject research and to refine definition of “vulnerable populations.”
	Updated the Research Misconduct policy to comply with the federal regulations.
	Updated and expanded the Intellectual Property Policy to reflect current developments in technologies, recent agreements, and to address unbundling of rights procedures.

THE LIBRARY

The Commission letter shared “a concern voiced in the self study that only 20% of the faculty report that the Library is adequate to meet their needs,” and urged “the University to develop a plan to address the dated nature of the collection.” The Site Visit Team made additional recommendations regarding the availability and usage of the collection. This issue is addressed in detail in Thematic Essay Two, and as appropriate in Thematic Essays Three and Four. The table below identifies continuing University efforts to enhance the library as a learning resource.

PROGRESS IN THE LIBRARY SINCE 1998	
1998	One-time budget allocation from the Chancellor’s office for books only.
	Allocated funding for retrospective books in humanities and social sciences; allocated funding to library faculty for general book purchases; allocated funding to academic departments for faculty book purchases.
1999	Developed Library Strategic Plan for implementation through 2004.
2001	Allocated funding for retrospective books in sciences and business.
2004	Updated Library Strategic Plan.
2005	Administered pilot of the LibQual survey to a sample of students, faculty and staff to assess campus perceptions of library service quality.
	Received “Local History Digital Resources Project” grant, sponsored by the California Digital Library and the California State Library, to digitize and make accessible a collection of 200 historical photographs.
	Implemented electronic document delivery through Interlibrary Loan.
	Increased public-access computers with Internet access from 18 to 48.
	Allocated funding for retrospective books in humanities.
2006	Established email notification for user requests, renewals, overdue notices, and cancellation of unfilled requests.
	Developed and implemented assessment of the quality of the library in support of student learning through Support Unit Review
2007	Administered the LibQual survey to a sample of sophomore and junior students to assess campus perceptions of library service quality.
	Completed “Stanislaus Region History and Culture Image Collection.”
	Added the Association for Computing Machinery Digital Library, bringing to 112 the number of databases offered by the University Library (10,000 scholarly journal titles).
	Initiated project to upgrade integrated library system from OLLIE to next generation of hardware and software.
	Upgraded wireless network to provide for access throughout library.
	Completed feasibility study for capital project to update library facility.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

APPENDIX X: OUTCOMES OF THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

1. Demonstration of institutional core commitment to capacity and preparation for the Educational Effectiveness Review.
 - a. Improvements made in response to concerns raised by the WASC Commission in 1999 are discussed in Thematic Essays Two and Four and enumerated in: *Response to Previous Commission Concerns*.
 - b. A formal review of the four WASC Standards and Criteria for Review was conducted in 2005-06, with the results informing the *Institutional Proposal* and subsequent work of the Inquiry Circles.
 - c. Special capacity issues resulting from the review and actions taken to address these issues are detailed and summarized in the Thematic Essays, as appropriate.
2. Refinement of a sustainable institutional research infrastructure and service delivery.
 - a. The Support Unit Review for the Office of Institutional Research is underway as part of an environmental scan of internal data needs and external report requirements.
 - b. The Office of Institutional Research refined its methods for responding to multiple campus priorities, added key staff capable of conducting research analysis and communicating findings appropriate to varied audiences, organized its electronic data portfolio for ease of navigation and readability, and established procedures and timelines for reporting institutional data.
3. Refinement of institutional capacity and organizational structures and systems for quality assurance.
 - a. The effectiveness of the functions of the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance was affirmed through a Support Unit Review. Key outcomes include substantial progress toward the institutionalization of assessment, including the development of the Program Assessment Coordinators, the increased use of direct methods of the assessment of student learning, and a widespread campus commitment to improving quality through assessment.
 - b. Results of the Support Unit Review of the Office of Academic Programs affirmed the effectiveness, efficiency, and reliability of operations, especially with regard to new and revised programs, accreditation, educational policy, and governance support. The review also prompted changes for improvement of curricular processing, including technological advances for the submission of electronic program proposals, course processing, and catalog updates.
 - c. An evaluation of the Support Unit Review process prompted changes to clarify procedural elements that caused confusion and redundancy, to focus the process more sharply on ways in which the administrative units contribute to support student learning, to streamline the selection of review teams, and to support electronic reporting.
 - d. The Academic Program Review process was reviewed through internal processes and by an external consultant. Findings indicate that changes enacted in the 2005 revision produced a superior result, including a streamlined process with greater focus on

student learning and future program planning, greater college accountability, improved institutional research data support, and exit meetings with the provost and college dean/faculty.

- e. The effectiveness of the University's assessment efforts was validated by an external consultant, Dr. Mary Allen. Results indicated the organizational structures for assessment and quality assurance are effective and have contributed to campus progress related to institutionalizing assessment, assessing learning outcomes, supporting program assessment coordinators, using assessment results for on-going quality improvement through use of assessment results, and working toward a common understanding of roles and responsibilities. The review recommended actions for continued development, including the integration of assessment into reward systems for programs and personnel, greater use of external reviewers for quality assurance, and greater alignment between the processes for Academic Program Review and Student Learning Assessment. The report also urged immediate attention to the assessment of the General Education program.
 - f. Actions to improve quality as derived from the above reviews are summarized above and throughout the report as appropriate.
4. Refinement of support and systems for enhancing faculty development.
 - a. The Support Unit Review of the Faculty Development Center resulted in an affirmation of the effectiveness, vitality, and breadth of programming and the spectacular physical environment for formal and informal faculty interactions. It also identified four critical issues for future enhancement: sustained faculty participation in faculty development sessions, training needs of faculty at various stages of their professional careers, support for personnel processes, and infusion of student learning and engagement into faculty development sessions. The review also recommended increasing the leadership role of Center personnel for faculty development related to the direct assessment of student learning.
 - b. Actions to refine and enhance faculty development are outlined in Thematic Essays Three and Four.
 5. Refinement of critical infrastructural support of teaching and learning by the Library and information technology.
 - a. A Support Unit Review of the Library was conducted; the capacity of the University Library is described in Thematic Essay Two.
 - b. A Support Unit Review of the Office of Information Technology was conducted; the capacity of OIT is described in Thematic Essay Two.
 - c. The Office of Information Technology conducted a review of accomplishments as outlined in the University's Academic Technology Plan. Overall, capacity and effectiveness of processes, infrastructure, and fiscal support varied, ranging from significant progress to limited attention, dependent upon fiscal availability. Actions and conclusions are included in Essay Two.
 - d. Other actions taken to enhance the Library and the Office of Information Technology as learning resources are discussed in Thematic Essays Two, Three, and Four, as appropriate.

6. Development of increased capacity in areas identified by the Inquiry Circles, governance committees, and administration.
 - a. Actions resulting from these inquiries are discussed as appropriate throughout the report, and in the Integrative Essay as they are preparatory for the Educational Effectiveness Review.

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