THE HEART OF THE MATTER:

STUDENT LEARNING AND STUDENT SUCCESS

EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW REPORT
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO
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INTRODUCTION

The Educational Effectiveness Review is designed to enable the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Commission to determine whether an institution fulfills the Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness: “The institution evidences clear and appropriate educational objectives and design at the institutional and program levels. The institution employs processes of review, including the collection and use of data, which ensure delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate awarded.” In keeping with the Commission’s goal of a focused accreditation process that permits adaptation and responsiveness to institutional context and priorities, California State University, Chico, elected to conduct both its Capacity and Preparatory Review and its Educational Effectiveness Review within the framework of Chico’s mission, values, and vision statements and the priorities of its Strategic Plan for the Future. The reaccreditation process was thereby leveraged to deepen campus engagement with the issues of educational and institutional effectiveness identified in the Plan.

In particular, as outlined in the institutional proposal accepted by the Proposal Review Committee at its March 2, 2004 meeting, the campus selected the following three themes for special emphasis in its Educational Effectiveness Review:

- The Nature of Student Engagement at a Residential Campus.
- The Refinement of the Academic Program Review.
- The Innovative Use of Technology.

The Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) team that conducted the visit on March 7-9, 2007 found CSU, Chico to “be a vibrant and healthy institution with many admirable qualities.” The University was particularly commended for its strong community, the remarkable commitment of the faculty, staff, and administration to student success, and for its work in service and civic engagement. The University was felt to have “a unique and much beloved character that enhances the experience of all members of the campus community.”

Even with this strong foundation, a number of issues and challenges were recommended for further attention as Chico moved to the final stage of its reaccreditation effort. The team wrote that the campus “needs to improve the manner by which it attests to its achievements in both the academic and the non-academic areas.” Accordingly, to demonstrate responsiveness the campus decided to incorporate a fourth theme in its Educational Effectiveness Review:

- Towards Increased Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability.

This theme is designed to address the specific recommendations proffered by the CPR team and, more importantly, move the institution towards measurement and assessment systems that will provide additional evidence for “Telling the Chico Story.”

Theme 1: The Nature of Student Engagement at a Residential Campus

CSU, Chico sees its unique residential situation as an opportunity to create an intensive, high-quality learning environment both in and outside the classroom. Indeed, the CPR Visiting Team noted, “In essence, CSU Chico … has the characteristics of a very large and successful learning community. … ‘The Chico Experience’, was eagerly affirmed by all groups that met with the team, and was also clearly expressed in ad hoc interactions with individuals in the community encountered by team members.” (p. 4). The underlying belief is that such a learning community fosters improved student learning. Chico elected to use the Educational Effectiveness Review as a means of systematically validating this belief. In particular, the campus chose to:

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• Articulate and assess the dimensions of “The Chico Experience” and determine which of these dimensions support student success and enhance student affinity for the community.2
• Embed diversity in its assessment of educational effectiveness in terms of student learning, student preparation, and student success.
• Assess the efficacy of Chico’s comprehensive alcohol drug education program that utilizes various prevention strategies to combat high-risk substance abuse.
• Examine the factors that promote learning and success for first-year freshmen students.

Theme 2: The Refinement of the Academic Program Review

Program review processes play a key role in the improvement of undergraduate and graduate education at CSU, Chico. Such reviews have the potential to systematize a program’s approach to academic quality and educational excellence. They provide a framework for quality management in our program offerings and other educational activities. Accordingly, Chico proposed to refine its Five-Year Program Review processes as part of the Educational Effectiveness Review. In particular, the campus chose to:

- Develop an infrastructure for the assessment of student learning
- Develop a new framework for academic program review.
- Enhance assessment in general education.

Theme 3: The Innovative Use of Technology

By the mid-1990’s, the leadership of CSU, Chico realized the emerging information technologies could offer significant opportunities for improved student and organizational learning. Its first wave of technology initiatives focused on building an information infrastructure that supported learning. As next steps we proposed to analyze the effectiveness of specific e-learning tools and strategies and explore academic technologies as a means for leveraging faculty and student efforts, especially in the area of general education where the need for greater efficacy with fewer resources is most critical.

More specifically, we elected to use the Educational Effectiveness Review as a means to:

- Review existing approaches and techniques (including CSU, Chico’s Learning Productivity Projects) that allow effective student learning and strong student engagement in large-enrollment venues.
- Experiment with the use of academic technology to achieve student learning, student engagement, and cost savings in a limited and representative number of larger demand General Education courses.

Theme 4: Towards Increased Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability

The CPR Visiting Team concurred with the conclusion in Chico’s Capacity and Preparatory Review Report that while major strides had been made, the University had not yet developed a “true culture of evidence through a university-wide strategic management plan” (p.31) and issued a series of recommendations that would further move the institution in that direction. (p. 44 - 48)

To demonstrate its commitment to more evidence-based planning and decision making, the campus chose as part of its Educational Effectiveness Review to further:

- Align strategic plans at university, divisional, and department / unit levels.
- Develop and link performance indicators at university, divisional, and department /unit levels.

2 The Institutional Proposal included a project on the use of National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data to analyze student and organizational performance. Following the recommendations from the Capacity and Preparatory Review Visiting Team this project was refocused on an analysis of the ‘Chico Experience.’
- Develop a new warehouse structure with associated business intelligence tools.
- Develop a Web-based communication / reporting infrastructure that enhances organizational feedback and learning and, as a result, enables Chico to more powerfully tell its story.

Concluding Essay: Today Decides Tomorrow

“Today Decides Tomorrow” reads the inscription above the doors of Kendall Hall. It is the motto of a university that focuses on the future while carrying forward the best of its past. In this integrative essay we reflect on the findings of institutional engagements recounted in this Educational Effectiveness Review Report and make recommendations for how CSU, Chico may ensure that the results of the Review become anchored in the evolving campus culture of evidence and accountability. We conclude with confidence that, even under the challenging circumstances ahead, CSU, Chico can—and will—choose its own future and fulfill its educational mission.
The Chico Experience

The Capacity and Preparatory Review Visitation team concluded that “CSU Chico has many notable institutional strengths. Certainly one of these is a remarkably clear and widespread view that the University has a unique and much beloved character that enhances the experience of all members of the campus community. This perspective, known as “The Chico Experience”, was eagerly affirmed by all groups that met with the team, and was also clearly expressed in ad hoc interactions with individuals in the community encountered by team members.” While the team certainly recognized the reality and significance of the Chico Experience in the character and the quality of the University, members felt that “there did not seem to be a sufficient consensus definition of what the community understood that experience to entail.” (Page 5). Accordingly, both the visitation team report and the Commission Action Letter recommended that the campus “invest in …carefully articulating the aspects of the Chico Experience” and develop a more organized approach to data gathering such that “… important goals, (e.g., “The Chico Experience”) do not appear merely as the sum of many disassociated parts.”

Supported by grants from the CSU Chancellor’s Office Advancement Fund Grant Program and the CSU, Chico Alumni Association affinity card program with Bank of America, in June of 2007, the division of University Advancement assumed management responsibility for what became known as the Chico Experience Project. Mr. Alan Rellaford, University Creative Director, assembled a planning team and a resource team to guide project activities, timelines and milestones. The Executive Team, made up of vice presidents and administrators representing the four divisions of the University, is responsible for overall project management, including project objectives, methodology, resource allocation approval and the monitoring of project milestones. The Resource Team provides general project support in the form of guiding and pursuing the details of the research components of the Chico Experience Project. (CFR 1.1)

The Chico Experience Research Program

At the June 27, 2007 University Advancement Quarterly Meeting, it was concluded that the first step in addressing the WASC CPR recommendations was to conduct an extensive research program to discover and articulate those qualities that define Chico State and the Chico Experience. The research program was envisioned to include an initial secondary research phase, followed by a qualitative phase designed to discover the dimensions of the Chico Experience and a quantitative phase to measure the attributes of the Chico experience, if not the Chico brand. Details of the envisioned research program were translated into a ‘mind map’ to guide future project activities.

Figure 1.1
Chico Experience Research Mind Map

(Click here for larger version)
Secondary Research

Members of the Resource Team identified existing research on Chico State in general and the Chico Experience in particular. The firm Discovery Collaborative of Portland, OR, was retained to conduct a Research Discovery Work Session to review this past research, identify attributes of the Chico Experience, identify missing attributes, discuss interrelationships among attributes, determine importance of attributes across audiences, and discuss how attributes may be used to create a meaningful compelling message.

Figure 1.2
Chico Experience in a Nutshell

Primary Research: Surveys

The result of the two previous phases informed the piloting of survey instruments among participants of Summer Send-Off BBQ’s: alumni, parents, and incoming students. The results suggest a commonality of emphasis on selected attributes in terms of recollection or intention. These top box attributes include campus attractiveness, academic quality, community, campus events, cost to attend, volunteer/service opportunities, meeting faculty/staff, extracurricular activities, major/academic programs, leadership opportunities, safety, career preparation opportunities, and recreational facilities.

Alumni responses to the open-ended question “In your own words, what is the Chico Experience?” produced a varied set of responses ranging from “It’s a feeling; it’s ‘home.’ It’s a safe place to visit, a wonderful campus, it’s a downtown that’s fun and walkable” to “The Chico Experience is living on your own away from parents and learning to grow as a person with newly acquired friends. Getting a great education from amazing teachers and learning, in my opinion, the best social skills any school in the State can offer,” to “Chico State provides a fantastic mix of academic challenges along with a time of socializing within a beautiful campus setting.” Recurring themes are the quintessential college town experience—“time of my life in which I learned who I was as a person and who I wanted to become as a professional,” friendly, inviting student-centered community (both college and city), small town atmosphere, academically challenging—with professors who bend over backwards to help, high quality education, learning that goes beyond the classroom, a place to foster your social and leadership skills, solid education opportunities, all set within a beautiful campus. Several responses seemed to attempt to capture a totality: “To me the Chico Experience is anything and everything Chico State has to offer its students—from clubs to sports to performing arts to academics. Chico has it all!”; “I learned how to live, share, love and work hard. Chico provided me with a great education and set me up well for jobs and life;” and “The epitome of my Chico Experience was eating burgers at the Bear after our weekly lecture forums, with teachers too. Everyone’s hanging out, talking about things; academic and not.”
Primary Research: Web Survey

To ensure that indeed all possible attributes had been identified, a series of four focus groups were conducted with current undergraduate students in October 2008. During these sessions, students described why they chose to attend Chico, how it has/has not lived up to their expectations and how they personally define their Chico Experience. The sessions concluded with in-depth discussion on the benefits students associate with the attributes that were most consistently mentioned within the groups.

Armed with a now comprehensive set of forty-four attributes derived from the three previous phases, a Web survey was designed to determine the extent to which students and alumni associate each attribute with their own personal "Chico Experience". A total of 500 total surveys were completed – 300 among current undergraduate students and 200 among alumni. The sampling error for a sample of 500 is +/- 4.4%.

The online survey with students and alumni began with a series of questions to gauge overall satisfaction and loyalty. Once these general measures were obtained, respondents went through a series of questions to assess the importance of specific attributes to their personal experience at Chico State. After completing this core component of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the importance of overall categories (academic programs, beauty of the campus, etc.) and rank a series of benefit statements derived from the qualitative sessions. A demographic section closed the survey.

A series of statistical analyses were conducted to identify a select subset of attributes that best defines the Chico Experience. The bulk of our analyses focused on four core measures: Top Box Satisfaction Ratings, Overall Importance Mean, Top Box Scores, and Loyalty Index Scores.

Chico State's students and alumni are highly satisfied. As the graphic below shows, almost all students and alumni are somewhat to extremely satisfied with their experience at Chico State.

![Overall Satisfaction Graph](image)

Alumni reflect more happily on their Chico Experience than the students currently living it. While both groups are quite happy, a significantly greater percentage of Chico State alumni give their experience the highest rating of "7" or "extremely satisfied" than do current students.

Differing levels of satisfaction and perceived importance of specific attributes of the Chico Experience allowed the identification of the attributes that contribute most to the optimal Chico Experience. The attributes that were found to make up the foundation of the Chico Experience may be grouped into four themes or factors (See Figure 1-4). Reviewing the survey data in detail, analysts at Discovery Collaborative were prompted to note: “It is understandable that many refer fondly to … The Chico Experience. Students and alumni share very high levels of satisfaction, as well as a deep appreciation for certain common aspects of their Chico Experience. However, it is also understandable that finding a clear definition of The Chico Experience is challenging as, on the surface, so many attributes appear to contribute equally to it.”
The Foundation of the Chico Experience

The Academic Experience factor especially encompasses the following attributes:

- Professors want students to succeed.
- Professors are passionate about what they teach; provide one-on-one assistance.
- Professors are easily accessible to students.
- The quality of academic programs leads to good job opportunities for graduates.

The underlying benefits associated with this factor have been highlighted in the statement below:

At Chico State, students feel like they are more than just a student identification number; professors genuinely care about them and offer the support they need to be successful. This provides students with the sense that they really matter to those who are teaching their courses. Students are confident that their education will lead to a good job after graduation. Students feel that the education they are getting at Chico State is unique and that people who really know Chico State understand that graduates are well-rounded and uniquely capable. This gives students a sense that they too are unique and that their strengths will be recognized by employers.

The factor titled Student and Campus Life includes:

- University staff are supportive, friendly and accessible.
- Students are warm, friendly and welcoming.
- Students have a lot of fun.

The underlying benefits associated with this factor are as follows:

At Chico State, students feel at home among a new family of friends and a supportive University community. Students feel connected to others and are more than just a face in the crowd. In this welcoming environment, students are able to enjoy their college life to the fullest. This gives them a sense of belonging and joy.

The Beauty of the Campus and Surrounding Area factor includes:

- The vast number of trees on campus contributes to its beauty.
- Chico Creek and the bridges that cross it are a special part of the campus.
- Nearby Bidwell Park offers natural beauty and a multitude of recreation opportunities.

The underlying benefits associated with this factor have been captured in the following statement:

The beauty of the Chico State campus and nearby Bidwell Park helps students feel a sense of peace and calm and reminds them to take the time to enjoy the moment. For many students who come from urban areas such as Los Angeles, it is the first time in their lives they have lived among trees and green, open spaces.

The Small College Town Atmosphere factor includes the attributes:

- Downtown is steps away from campus.
- The cost of living is relatively inexpensive
- It's bike friendly.

The underlying benefits associated with this factor have been highlighted in the below statement:

Students love the sense of freedom that living so close to town gives them. They can walk or ride their bikes most places they need to go—eliminating the need for a car or relying on others for transportation. The town is an extension of campus and its proximity provides students with a sense that they have a wide variety of things to do.
The Chico Experience Research Program: Related Efforts

Additional Research Work

To complete the research process, CSU, Chico is conducting online surveys with faculty and staff in January of 2009. The Chico Experience Project Team is also considering the implementation of video interviews with various audiences to further uncover the value proposition of the Chico Experience and the personal experiences or stories that help reinforce these messages.

The Chico Experience Design Project

Students in the Communication Design Graphic Design Portfolio Review class were given an assignment to create a dimensional box defining their personal Chico Experience. This assignment, known as the 10th Piece – it is the 10th and largest assignment given to students to demonstrate conceptual problem solving skills – were completed on December 5, 2008. In the assignment, students were required to visually define the Chico Experience using a variety of media, demonstrating their mastery of basic design concepts and techniques. Selected completed projects were photographed for presentation at the March 2009 WASC poster session.

Summary

One of the expected outcomes of this research project was a further articulation and assessment of the “Chico Experience” perspective. The University wanted to begin a more formal process of documenting and systematically gathering data on one of its major hallmarks and thereby put itself in a better position to tell “The Chico Story.” The data gathered so far corroborate the Capacity and Preparatory Review team’s recognition of the “significance and reality of The Chico Experience” and allow the University to move toward a ‘more organized, less scattershot approach to data gathering, such that … “The Chico Experience’ do(es) not appear merely as the sum of disassociated parts …” (p. 44)

A second major outcome of this research project will be the further refinement of a brand positioning statement that will inform future communication efforts. Results from the Chico Experience Research Project, so far, have produced serious ‘food for thought’ for addressing opportunities and challenges for the Chico brand. While the pillars and foundation of The Chico Experience are the same across audiences, further analysis suggests that there are specific attributes that can be highlighted in targeted communications in order to craft more meaningful and relevant messages for each audience. Finally, the information gathered will serve as baseline data for developing and monitoring our evolving brand position.

The Diversity Scorecard

Previous WASC teams have noted that diversity is a major issue for CSU, Chico. The 1996 Visiting Team concluded: “Historically, CSU, Chico has been a campus that has attracted mostly suburban, middle-class students from other parts of California. Those students are less numerous today and more the subject of intense recruitment competition.” The 2007 Capacity and Preparatory Review Visitation Team commended “the University for progress, under the strong leadership of President Zingg, on this important topic.” At the same time, the team noted, “Despite these welcome signs of progress, there are still significant concerns about the climate in the community, and the recruitment and retention of minority students, faculty, and staff. The team recommends that the campus consider articulating the need for increased diversity as more that merely equitable access, as important as that is …”

In response to President Zingg’s call for “setting ambitious goals to add diversity to its campus community, and to do more to engage the entire community in the challenging work of increasing awareness of, and respect for, diversity,” and following a recommendation from the Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention Work Group to “examine Bensimon’s Model (2004) as a viable means for assessing diversity and promoting change on campus,” selected members of our campus were invited to a November 2004 Equity Scorecard Workshop facilitated by Georgia Bauman and Byron Clift Brelland from the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. The underlying premise of the USC Equity Scorecard Project is that “an examination of data related to particular indicators of student outcomes disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender … by a group of individuals can … promote organizational learning at the individual and group
levels.” Accordingly, the workshop was conducted as an evidentiary inquiry into the lack of equity in educational outcomes, focused participants on this inequity and thereby heightened their motivation to address its causes.

The Framework for the Diversity Scorecard

The USC Equity Scorecard Framework unveiled at the November 2004 campus workshop identified four dimensions—access, retention, excellence, and institutional receptivity—to the analysis of equity in educational outcomes. A subsequent review of alternative frameworks for charting and monitoring diversity efforts, including the one presented by Daryl G. Smith at a Plenary Session at the 79th Annual Meeting of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges, prompted Chico to adopt the Diversity Scorecard model shown below.

![Figure 1.5](Click here for large version)

![Figure 1.6](Click here for large version)

The framework depicts four dimensions of diversity—access and success, education and scholarship, institutional viability and vitality, and climate and intergroup relations. This model was more closely aligned with campus conversations on understanding diversity. Access and Success examines the extent to which student populations (disaggregated) gain access to campus programs and resources and become successful broadly defined in terms of learning, persistence, graduation, and satisfaction. It is particularly concerned with inclusion and academic success as well as personal achievement of underrepresented groups. Education and Scholarship addresses diversity from the perspective of the educational and scholarly roles of the University. It includes availability of curricula with a significant diversity component, diversity course-taking patterns, student outcomes related to diversity as well as faculty engagement with diversity issues. Climate and Intergroup Relations focuses on the type and quality of the interaction among students, faculty, and staff as well as individual and group perceptions of the campus commitment to diversity. Institutional Viability and Vitality characterizes the campus capacity and willingness to plan, implement, and evaluate comprehensive diversity work, including the human, intellectual, physical, and fiscal resources to support such work. (CFR 1.5)

Building the Chico Diversity Scorecard

CSU, Chico embarked upon what turned out to be a multi-year, multi-phased process for building its diversity scorecard. In phase I, Mr. Travon Robinson was hired as the Director for University Diversity Programs, and the Diversity Scorecard Project (DSP) was officially launched. In phase II, the DSP Committee focused its efforts on the selection of a diversity framework and the development of an inventory of existing data on the four dimensions of the scorecard. In addition, a Campus Climate subcommittee of the DSP committee began a more comprehensive approach to attracting and retaining a more diverse student and employee population. The latter was dubbed the B19 initiative for its goal of moving the diversity of the student population “Beyond 19 Percent.”

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2 Adapted from Alma R. Clayton-Pederson, Sharon Parker, Daryl G. Smith, Jose F. Moreno, and Daniel H. Teraguchi, Making a Real Difference with Diversity, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C., 2007, p.15.

3 These definitions are adapted from a number of sources, especially from Daryl G. Smith et. al., A Diversity Research Agenda, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C., 2000, pp. 5-7.
After reviewing existing enrollment and retention data, the B19 subcommittee decided to conduct exploratory research on minority faculty, staff, and students’ experiences at CSU, Chico and their reasons for attending, staying, or leaving. This information was deemed as potentially useful in the formulation of strategies for increasing the campus diversity profile. Focus groups were conducted with seven diverse groups of students and one group of diverse staff. This qualitative phase of the B19 initiative revealed a number of recurring themes:

- Incoming students, staff, and faculty experience the need for multiple transitions in order to be successful at Chico State.
- While finding welcoming and supportive structure on campus, their experiences off campus continue to be less than positive.

Students participating in the focus groups critically highlighted the poor physical condition of the campus multicultural center. In response, the multicultural center was merged with the Jackie Faris-Rees Institute for Student Leadership to become the new Cross Cultural Leadership Center (CCLC) under the leadership of Mr. Charles (CC) Carter, Student Affairs. The new center opened its doors this fall (2008) with a gala dinner and multicultural program.

These data also informed special enrollment management efforts focusing primarily on the recruitment and retention of African American students. Initial results are encouraging:

**Figure 1.7**

### Freshmen Diversity

In an effort to foster higher levels of retention among African American students, improve student success and achievement among African American students, and strengthen an African American and campus community that is supportive and nurturing, the first African American Excellence and Success Annual Retreat was held in January 2006. [See final report](#).

Several on-going activities emerged from the inaugural retreat: students held Black Pride lunches every Wednesday in the BMU, and study hours and tutoring sessions on Monday and Thursday evenings; students also created Black History Month passive boards in the residence halls, and hosted various social events (movie nights, mentor group dinners, bowling night, and skating night. The third retreat was held October 10 – 12, 2008 with thirty-four students in attendance. Students ranging from freshmen to seniors represented twenty-one majors on campus. Student attendees found the retreat meaningful and empowering (survey) as captured by this student’s remarks:

“Empowerment and Unity Retreat is what this experience should be called. Not only was I empowered and united with my fellow brothers and sisters I also retreated from everything that was holding me back from a fulfilling life. I ran away from negative thoughts about myself and others. I fled from people and things in society that continued to tell me ‘no!’ I have never in my life felt so connected to a group of African Americans and I have never felt so much love and support from people that I had just met... Overall, I feel empowered and united with the African American community. I feel like I have grown so tall this weekend and I know I will continue to grow with my brothers and sisters in the years to come. This would have never been experienced if we did not make a movement and retreated together.”
In phases III and IV, work continued on connecting diversity to all areas of campus functioning and in adopting the learning organization approach. In particular, efforts continued on the further identification, refinement, and collection of indicators for each of the dimensions of the diversity scorecard (See Figure 1-8). Whereas AY 2007-2008 saw significant progress on the performance indicators for the Access and Success dimension, phase V, AY 2008-2009, is devoted to an active examination of existing and needed data for the remaining three dimensions. It is anticipated that the end of phase V will produce baseline data which provides the background information for the development of the proposed Strategic Plan for Campus Diversity and the setting of annual goals for its stated priorities.

Figure 1.8
Four Dimensions of Campus Diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access and Success</th>
<th>Education and Scholarship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underrepresented Student Population</td>
<td>Diversity in the Formal Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underrepresented Student Applications</td>
<td>Course-Taking Patterns of Students*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underrepresented Student Admits</td>
<td>Student Learning about Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid by Category*</td>
<td>Faculty Diversity-Related Education and Scholarship*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence by Category</td>
<td>Staff Diversity-Related Education and Scholarship*</td>
</tr>
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<td>Degrees Awarded to Underrepresented Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time to Degree by Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduation Rates by Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Satisfaction by Category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Viability and Vitality</th>
<th>Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrality of Diversity in Campus Mission and Planning</td>
<td>Conversations on Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Strategies and Dedicated Resources</td>
<td>Multicultural Welcome Receptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Resources for Diversity</td>
<td>Type and Quality of Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compositional Diversity of Faculty</td>
<td>Quality of Experience and Engagement on Campus</td>
</tr>
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<td>Compositional Diversity of Staff</td>
<td>Perceptions of CSU, Chico’s Efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional History of Diversity Hallmarks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional History of Diversity Issues and Incidents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data are currently being collected on the institutional indicators not yet hyperlinked; results will be available for inspection during the March, 2009 campus visit.

6 Ibid, p.16.
Reflections on Campus Diversity Efforts

Over the years, diversity for CSU, Chico has been both an opportunity and challenge. As a result, in 2003, “diversity” was chosen by the campus as a topic for its upcoming Educational Effectiveness Review. Early experiences with the topic led to the refinement of the definition of the EER project: Build a CSU, Chico Diversity Scorecard. The scorecard was viewed as a means to bring about further institutional awareness, interpretation, and action.

The multi-year effort at building the CSU, Chico Diversity Scorecard has taught us a number of important lessons:

- The number of diversity-related programs and initiatives at Chico is impressive and ought to be commended. What appears to be lacking, however, is the intentional management of functional connections to educational excellence, assessment processes, and accountability mechanisms. We applaud in this respect the charge given to the Office of Diversity to develop a strategic plan for campus diversity.

- Our initial experiences confirm the underlying premise of the organizational learning approach to institutional change. When groups of individuals review diversity data, then analyze and interpret those data, they are moved to act upon them. It is incumbent upon the campus leadership to create a sense of urgency that frames the action phase.

- A strengthening of the link between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs has led to a leveraging of expertise and resources for more impactful diversity efforts on campus.

- We must hold ourselves accountable for realizing the campus vision of a vibrant, inclusive learning community. Senior administrators must not only remain active and involved by providing incentives, generating short-term successes, consolidating gains, and institutionalizing them; but, most importantly, they must also hold themselves and their direct reports accountable for plan and project implementation and ensure that non-compliance is met with real consequences.

- We are encouraged by the use of diversity-related data in public presentations on campus matters. We applaud the recent President’s Report and its section on Diversity. We enthusiastically endorse the President’s intention to issue a bi-annual State of Diversity Report as further evidence of the institution’s commitment to the value of diversity.

- Diversity is dynamic and ubiquitous. We recognize that our definition of diversity unfolds as we learn and grow in our efforts. We suggest that it be defined as “the rich plethora of differences among people based on culture, ability, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economic backgrounds, age, and sexual orientation. This richness of difference models the multicultural differences of our nation as well as the global society in which we live. Our definition of diversity extends beyond the social and political, and includes intellectual diversity as well. Through diversity, individuals and groups express differences in thoughts and attitudes that further enrich our learning and service communities.”

- Finally, it is clear, once more, that any attempt to make excellence inclusive must focus on building long-term institutional capacity. If we want high-quality outcomes along the dimensions of the CSU, Chico Diversity Scorecard, the campus must invest in building further infrastructure and in developing faculty, staff, and unit capabilities. Change will not happen unless the necessary resources are made available to drive the process.

Summary

The “organizational learning” approach to guiding the campus diversity efforts involves assisting campus leaders in doing comprehensive diversity work, collecting and interpreting disaggregated, longitudinal data to measure progress and using the results to improve campus processes and practices. Solid progress has been made in collecting, examining, and reporting on data related to campus diversity initiatives. At the same time, much remains to be done, including developing a strategic plan for campus diversity with measurable goals and outcomes, implementing a system of accountability with real incentives and consequences, and coordinating diversity efforts with greater intentionality and transparency. We are encouraged, however, about these tasks ahead. First, we recognize that bringing about a radical conceptual and practical shift in campus thinking takes a significant period of time. Second, notable strides have been made in establishing comprehensive diversity efforts which are in the process of being institutionalized. It is therefore likely that meaningful progress will continue to be achieved and sustained over the next ten years. The University leadership is clearly signaling its determination to “pursue diversity not just as an idea to embrace, but as a community to form.” We are optimistic for the future; we are poised to meet the challenge of a true diverse learning community.
Towards a Comprehensive Alcohol Drug Education Program

As national headlines attest, students continue to be seriously injured and worse as a result of drinking. Along with the rest of the nation’s colleges and universities, the CSU, Chico campus has mourned the tragic and senseless loss of a number of its students due to alcohol abuse. In each case, the whole campus—students, staff, and faculty—was overwhelmed by the tragedy. Each loss underscored the need for faculty, staff, administrators, and student leaders to improve our prevention efforts. The campus realizes that irresponsible and/or illegal use of alcohol creates academic, social, physical, emotional, and legal problems for our students that prevent them from being successful at the University and beyond. Accordingly, the University, particularly the division of Student Affairs, has made alcohol and drug use education and prevention a major priority. In this effort, the University committed itself to working with community partners to prevent these problems and tragedies and to keep our students, and the community, safe. (CFR 2.11)

As the University continues to put energy and resources into programs aimed at discouraging alcohol and drug abuse, while encouraging responsible behavior, it is appropriate to examine the efficacy of these efforts. More specifically, in its Institutional Proposal, the campus proposed to “assess the efficacy of Chico’s comprehensive alcohol drug education program that utilizes various prevention strategies to combat high-risk substance abuse.” (p. 7).

A Call to Action

In April of 2002, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) turned the national spotlight on the problem of harmful drinking among college students and issued A Call to Action7. The Call to Action summarized the findings emanating from the work of the Task Force on College Drinking and included evidence-based recommendations on problems related to college drinking. Central to the Task Force findings was the recognition that successful interventions occur at three distinct levels:

- Individuals, including at-risk or alcohol-dependent drinkers.
- Student body as a whole.
- University and the surrounding community.

Based on the research reviewed, the Task Force presented its 3-in-1 Framework as a comprehensive overarching framework with multiple complementary components as a starting point for effective and research-based prevention and intervention efforts. Colleges and universities are encouraged to adopt the 3-in-1 Framework and then select strategies found to be effective or promising and tailor them to the special needs of their campuses. The selected interventions must operate simultaneously to reach individual students, the student body, and the greater college community. CSU, Chico answered the ‘call to action’ and, in partnership with the leadership of the City of Chico and other concerned, supportive citizens, tailored programs to address its specific alcohol-related problems within this overarching framework.

The CSU, Chico Alcohol & Other Drugs Task Force

The Task Force on Alcohol and other Drugs, a subcommittee of the President’s Commission on Campus Life, charged with the responsibility of addressing issues of student alcohol and substance use and abuse, “identified a variety of areas and programming ideas that are measurable and doable.” The Task Force recommended a series of intervention strategies, including making AlcoholEdu a requirement for all incoming students, enforcing stricter University Housing (UHFS) alcohol possession and consumption policies8 as well as expanding the scope of the Community Youth and Alcohol Committee (CYAC).

Simultaneous implementation of proposed intervention strategies has had its effects:

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7 National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges, National Institutes of Health, Publication No. 02-3010, April 2002.

8 Those who violate the alcohol policy are required to pay for and attend an alcohol-education course in addition to a disciplinary sanction and may be required to perform community service. Those students who violate the policy more than once may undergo an individual substance abuse assessment in addition to disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. Students residing in University Housing facilities who violate the policy a second time will, in addition to university sanctions, be removed from the residence halls and are responsible for their housing payment for the rest of the academic year.
Historically, college drinking research has demonstrated that broad-based community-level interventions can reduce such problems as access to alcohol, underage drinking, driving under the influence (DUI) and walking under the influence (WUI). CSU, Chico decided to experiment with a prevention approach that targeted specific student-centered neighborhoods. The University’s Police Department signed a joint law enforcement agreement with the City of Chico Police Department that defined primary responder responsibilities in the neighborhood that includes the social fraternity and sorority chapter houses. The results of this agreement have been the implementation of additional efforts, coordinated with the City of Chico and other agencies to combat high-risk drinking by students. They include an increased police presence in near-campus neighborhoods, DUI and WUI checkpoints, and a new phone line for reporting hazing and other student safety concerns.

The AlcoholEdu® Program

For the past three years, CSU, Chico has been administering AlcoholEdu® for College to its entire first-year student population, with the goal of not only changing individual students’ knowledge and behaviors, but of changing the drinking culture on campus as a whole. The objective is to create a learning community with a common educational experience that motivates behavior change, resets unrealistic expectations about the effects of alcohol, links choices about drinking to academic and personal success, helps students practice safer decision-making, and engages students in creating a healthier campus community.

AlcoholEdu® for College uses evidence-based research to educate students about alcohol and its effects so as to prevent alcohol abuse. As part of the program, students are surveyed before and after educational materials are presented during an online session, and then again 30 days afterwards in a mandatory follow-up session. The surveys are designed to monitor how students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding alcohol are changing.

Following is a summary of the key findings from CSU, Chico’s implementation of AlcoholEdu® for College. The findings are based on self-report data obtained from 2589 first-year students (2007) who completed three surveys, a pre-test, and an exam (post-test).

The following charts show the increases in knowledge, increase in one of the protective factor and increase in care-taking behavior:
Knowledge gain:

*Figure 1.10*

Knowledge Gain from AlcoholEdu

![Knowledge Gain](image1)

Protective factor:

*Figure 1.11*

Changed the Way Think about BAC

![Protective Factor](image2)

Care-taking behavior:

*Figure 1.12*

Looked out for a Friend’s Safety

![Care-taking Behavior](image3)
Safer California Universities Project

The Safer California Universities: a Multi-Campus Alcohol Problem Prevention Study, funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), is designed to help identify the most effective ways of preventing and dealing with heavy alcohol consumption by college students. More specifically, the study evaluates the potential impact of a “risk management” approach to preventing alcohol-related problems. The research design measures alcohol consumption and problems on several campuses, half of which are randomly assigned to carry out the experimental programs and half of which are assigned to continue with their usual programs and policies. The University of California and California State University systems agreed to participate in this study, which is being carried out by the Prevention Research Center (PRC) in Berkeley, California. Both the experimental and comparison campuses have been provided funding to support staff time required for data collection and related research activities. CSU, Chico received $192,000 federal anti-alcohol abuse grants along with other campuses such as UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, CSU, Sacramento, CSU, Long Beach, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and San Jose State.

The “risk management approach” includes the elements of risk assessment, risk prevention and reduction, and risk monitoring as shown in the schematic diagram below:

Figure 1.13

CSU, Chico has served as an intervention site for four years and now serves as a comparison site for continuing treatment sites. Results have been encouraging: the mean proportion of times drunk at a number of settings has declined.

Figure 1.14  Figure 1.15  Figure 1.16

(Click here for larger version)
The Special Role of the President

Our recent experiences suggest that presidential leadership is essential to the success of any efforts to change the culture of drinking and substance abuse on a campus. As the University’s chief executive officer and public spokesperson, the president sets in motion plans and supports actions needed to reverse the existing culture. In February of 2005 President Paul J. Zingg addressed the Greek Organizations and made the University’s position very clear:

“… I am not here to give a lecture, or to preach a sermon, or to deliver a warning. Rather, I am here to tell you how it is.

This is how it is. The recent senseless, tragic death is the last straw in the University’s experience in dealing with the conditions and behaviors which contributed to it. Although such conditions and behaviors are not a monopoly of the Greek organizations of our campus, they are, fairly or not, accurately or not, largely attributed to these organizations and its membership – you.

The University has no intention of waiting around for another tragic incident, another abusive act, another hurtful, thoughtless event to occur before declaring what its position is in these matters and what its actions will be. So let me be very clear about this position that now guides our actions as never before: You are either part of the solution – collectively and every day – or you are part of the problem. You are either part of a problem to be eliminated, or you are a partner to be engaged in finding solutions.”

Similarly, in September of 2008, President Zingg did not sign the Amethyst Initiative because he felt the problems the signatories wanted to address should be met hands on with confidence and commitment and not with hands up in despair:

“… the issue here is not about the drinking age and some simplistic notion that lowering it will remedy many ill-advised social behaviors and their often tragic consequences. It is about taking responsibility for the conduct we wish to see among the students on our campuses, understanding the conditions and causes of alcohol abuse, and working diligently and purposefully with campus experts, community partners, and yes, students to establish higher behavioral expectations and a safer social environment.”

With these proactive stands, President Zingg followed in the footstep of his predecessor, President Manuel A. Esteban, who had similarly, and with equal intentionality, served as a catalyst for Chico’s efforts and forcefully communicated his concerns about the need to protect students from harm and thereby improve the quality of life for the entire campus community. Each President, as well as those before them (Drs. Scott G. McNall and Robin S. Wilson), was committed to work with community partners to keep our students, and our community, safe.

Summary

For almost 10 years, in partnership with the leadership of the City of Chico and concerned, supportive citizens, CSU, Chico has mounted a comprehensive effort to prevent alcohol and drug abuse and encourage safer and more responsible student social behavior. The effort focuses on awareness and education and includes such strategies as a mandatory alcohol education program for all freshmen, alcohol-free alternative social and entertainment programs, peer education through a survivor series, parental notification of alcohol policy violations by student housing residents, a safe-ride program, a social-host and safe-party guide, a uniform alcohol policy for all student organizations, and a students-helping-students campaign. The data reviewed suggest that such measures do make a difference. Alcohol and drug violations in student housing have declined significantly; student knowledge about blood alcohol concentration and care-taking behaviors has increased; binge drinking and DUIs among our students have declined; and the numbers of alcohol-related misconduct arrests and medical transports of our students have decreased.

The First Year Experience at CSU, Chico

The First Year Experience (FYE) initiative at CSU, Chico began in the early 1990s as a result of concerns expressed by administrators and faculty about student academic success. The initiative has continued to grow through the years to encompass more aspects of the freshmen year. In 2002, the campus selected FYE as one of the projects for its Educational Effectiveness Review (EER). More specifically, in its Institutional Proposal the campus proposed to "examine the factors that
promote learning and success for first-year freshmen students and participate in the Foundations of Excellence in the First Year of College project. Accordingly, in preparation for the EER current programs were reviewed, assessment and redesign were initiated, and new programs initiatives were implemented. (CFR 2.10–2.12)

**University 101: Introduction to University Life**

In fall 2005, the Dean of Undergraduate Education, William E. Loker, was assigned the additional responsibility of managing the FYE program. A review of existing FYE initiatives revealed that UNIV 101, *Introduction to University Life*, the key course for the FYE effort, suffered from a lack of coordination and rather haphazard staffing. The stated goals of the course were used to develop an assessment questionnaire that was administered to all sections. At the same time, the effectiveness of a major component of the course, information literacy instruction, was assessed using a pre-test/post-test instrument developed by Chico’s librarians. Results confirmed the suspicion that UNIV 101 was only partially meeting its goals, lacked the strong academic foundation implicit in a 3 unit GE course and was due for a major overhaul.

![Figure 1.17 University 101 Course Evaluation](image)

The FYE Director, Cynthia (Thia) L. Wolf and Dean Loker shared the commitment that an “introduction to university life” must have at its heart a strong introduction to the university’s primary purpose: the life of the mind and the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Other course goals include easing the transition to college life, developing information literacy skills and enhancing personal health and well-being. With assistance from external funding, they began a major redesign of the course as the centerpiece of Chico’s FYE program.

In spring 2006, Wolf and Deanna Berg, Director of Civic Engagement, applied to participate in the CSU Civic Learning Institute (CLI) to gain insight from nationally recognized experts in the field of FYE and civic engagement and to consult with colleagues in the CLI. The objective was to develop pilot curriculum around two new foci: academic inquiry and civic engagement. A follow-up grant to implement the design was submitted in fall 2006 and awarded by the Chancellor’s office for implementation in fall 2007. In spring 2007, Loker, Wolf and Berg submitted a proposal to the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ (AAC&U) *Bringing Theory to Practice* project to further develop FYE efforts that enhance civic and academic engagement and their relationship to student well-being. The proposal was funded for AY 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 and further enabled the redesign of UNVI 101. Also in spring 2007, Wolf applied for and received a “Transforming Course Design” grant from the CSU Chancellor’s Office. This grant focused on improving multi-section uniformity and other aspects of UNIV 101 through the wise use of technology. As part of this grant, the Director developed an online resource for students to replace a textbook. The online resource is flexible in design, capable of undergoing yearly revision, and focused specifically on CSU, Chico rather than “college in general.” Parts of the resource are student-authored.

At the same time selected sections of UNIV 101 were offered as one course of three courses in CourseLINK in order to offer students an interdisciplinary, team designed and critically focused first-year curricular and co-curricular experience.
A year long assessment was conducted in 2006-2007. In the Fall 2006, four sections of UNIV 101 participated (with instructor and student permission) in a classroom ethnography that placed the FYE Director and a student assistant in four sections for the purpose of observation and to interview students. This ethnographic research provided valuable insights, identifying common deficiencies across sections. At the end of the first semester, student volunteers from these sections continued the assessment in spring 2007 with a case study of the course’s impact on students’ transition to university life. Ten students volunteered, 7 completed the study. Results were discouraging. Students had made no apparent gains in the areas of information literacy skills, knowledge about university life, or reading practices. By the end of the spring 2007 term they could barely remember the class, even though they had taken it the previous semester.

The externally-supported redesign was planned during spring 2007 with workshops for faculty who would be teaching in the redesigned pilot sections and implemented in fall 2007. Embedded assessments of students’ reflective writing sought to show students’ developing understanding of engaged scholarship/civic engagement. A reflective writing assignment on civic engagement administered in pilot and “regular” sections of UNIV 101 showed a difference in students’ conceptualization of civic engagement between those in the pilot curriculum and students in the regular UNIV 101 curriculum. Students were asked to define “civic engagement” and reflect on what they had learned about civic engagement during the past semester and how they had learned about it. The analysis of student writing revealed that the new curriculum altered students’ understanding of civic engagement and indicated a shift in attitude toward a positive, more scholarly and complex view of civic participation and responsibility. In addition, a survey of various cohorts of students was carried out in fall 2007 as part of the BTP project. Results did not reveal significant differences on measures of academic engagement, civic engagement and student well-being among the groups surveyed.

The most significant impact on student attitudes appeared to be among those students participating in the Town Hall meeting. Multiple assessments are being designed to repeat these evaluations with a larger group of students in 2008-2009.

**English 130/ Town Hall**

The Town Hall meeting is a curricular innovation, designed by the English composition faculty, first implemented in fall 2006 that focuses on student research, writing and presentation in the public sphere. The curriculum was developed in selected sections of ENGL 130, Academic Writing: the required freshman composition course. The Town Hall was an independent faculty-led innovation supported by the FYE director and the dean for Undergraduate Education. Student work in these sections culminates in a Town Hall meeting where students present the results of a semester’s work in researching and writing on public policy issues of concern to them. Expert consultants from the campus and community are invited to participate in the Town Hall and provide additional information, support and guidance to students as they pursue the implications and impacts of their research. The Town Hall was enthusiastically received by students, faculty and administration. BTP survey results (cited above) showed that the Town Hall is the pedagogical innovation that most influences students’ sense of academic and civic engagement. Embedded assessment in ENGL 130 revealed that participation in Town Hall sections of ENGL 130 improved students’ abilities to use research in extended written inquiry projects. BTP funds continue to support coordination, logistics, and curriculum development associated with the Town Hall.
Figure 1.19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
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<th>T-Value</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Town Hall Sections</td>
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</table>

Peer Mentor Program

In spring 2006 and spring 2007, two focus group meetings were organized with FY students with GPA’s below 1.5. These students articulated a need for a trusted older student to serve as a guide in the first-year of college. In response, the FYE Director turned to the concept of "peer mentors" and developed a trial syllabus for a Peer Mentor training class, offered for the first time in spring 2007. The class was developed based on the extensive “communities of practice” research developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger9 demonstrating that a key component in learning is the interaction between more capable/more experienced practitioners and new practitioners in a community. This program provides older, successful students as role models and guides by embedding them in UNIV 101 classes with incoming students. The first offering in spring 2007 did not yield enough mentors for all sections; but in spring 2008, the class provided enough mentors for the entire UNIV 101 program. The FYE Director then oversaw an extensive revision of the online resource for UNIV 101 based on student and faculty feedback from fall 2007 and from the students in the 2008 Peer Mentor course.

Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

Chico’s EOP program was established in 1968 to improve the access and retention of historically low-income and educationally disadvantaged students. The EOP First-year Experience is a year-long living and learning community. The goals of the program are to assist students with the transition from high school to college, acquaint students with each other and with staff and faculty, provide academic skill development, help students take responsibility for their own futures, and to understand and use resources available to them in college. EOP students are offered support services designed to assist them in overcoming the many obstacles that a new educational and social environment may present. There are about 200 students in the program. One of the primary measures of success of the program is its ability to retain low income and first generation students after one year compared to non-EOP persistence. These results are encouraging and have stimulated the staff to continue their efforts at assistance for this student audience. (CFR 2.10)

Figure 1.20

First Time Freshman Persistence at CSU, Chico

EOP versus ALL


Advising and Retention Programs

Academic Advising Programs (AAP) includes Advising, Evaluations, Articulation, and Orientation. AAP is a centralized office that assists undergraduate students to make a successful transition to university life; to take responsibility for learning how to set academic, career, and personal goals; to develop the strategies for achieving them; and to graduate successfully in a timely manner. AAP has responsibility for Undeclared Majors and students who are on Academic Probation or who are subject to Academic Disqualification. Recent efforts have focused on strategies to reach a greater number of students while operating with fewer resources (significant staffing and operating expense reductions). To that end, we have begun to identify key performance indicators, we have enhanced online resources, e.g., an online orientation for new students, online GPA calculator, and an online intervention for students on academic probation (OLLE) and have adopted several group advising strategies. We are in the process of developing an assessment for the process of advising. (CFR 2.12)

Residential Life: University Housing and Food Service

Its residential setting allows CSU, Chico’s Department of Housing and Food Services (UHFS) to provide residence hall living / learning experiences that support the academic and personal development of our students. University Housing accommodates approximately 1900 residents—predominantly first-year students—and provides a series of services, programs and activities that are designed to foster student success.

Thematic Living is offered to 474 first-year students including: 4 Honors Houses (including a Sustainability House), Business Resource Center, Project Math & Science, MESA Program, Agriculture, Course-Linked Programs (Self and Community, Chico as Place and Pre-Business), Recreational Sports, Engineering and Natural Sciences. Students in these communities in 2007-2008 reported that they studied and discussed class topics with their floor mates, supported each others’ academic success, felt that faculty cared about their academic success and felt that living on-campus had a positive impact on their studies and social and personal growth in greater numbers than students who did not live in thematic communities.

Another positive measure of thematic living is the Engineering and Natural Sciences community in Mechoopda Hall. Since being organized as a thematic living community in 2006-2007, there has been a decline in incidents of problem student conduct and students in the living community have, on average, a higher GPA for Biology 103.

The Faculty Mentor Program was developed by UHFS, the FYE Program and the Dean for Undergraduate Education for students who do not live in theme communities. The pilot program consisted of 6 faculty mentors, one faculty to one Resident Advisor (RA) and one floor (35 students). The faculty mentor ate frequent meals with students of “their floor” and organized diversity, educational and social programs. Feedback from residents led to expanding the program and establishing common expectations for faculty members and RAs. An orientation session was created in fall 2007 to provide program examples, set expectations and hear from the pilot program participants. The pilot program was expanded for AY 2007-2008 and 17 faculty members participated (all 6 pilot program faculty returned). This allowed the students to
connect with faculty members outside the classroom and greatly humanized the faculty member’s role. The faculty mentors were also afforded the opportunity to learn about current student culture and interests.

Figure 1.22

As a result of the Faculty Mentor Program, my residents . . .

Based 2007-2008 feedback, faculty and RA’s will be encouraged to plan joint programs, to make sure that early contacts are made and arrange programs that are spread out rather than clustered towards the end of each semester. The Program will continue for AY 2008-2009 with 17 faculty mentors.

Summary

CSU, Chico has a rich tradition of a campus-wide commitment to the development and enhancement of programs and services intended to help students make a successful transition to, and establish their place in, university life—a life that finds support both in the classroom and in all aspects of university and community experience outside the classroom. The first year of university life is seen as critical to student learning and student success. The campus is therefore purposefully structuring and nurturing first-year students’ academic, intellectual, cultural, social, and civic engagements and personal development.

More recently, the First-Year Experience Program has benefited from an enthusiastic and highly capable director and an infusion of resources—in a very tight budgetary environment—to revamp critical elements of the program. Assessment is now built into key aspects of the program and guides ongoing efforts aimed at program development and improvement. The program will continue to seek external partners to support its efforts but is also developing contingency plans to maintain programmatic initiatives even in the absence of this external support.
**THEME 2: A REFINEMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

**Assessing Student Learning**

Interest in defining and assessing the outcomes of student learning has grown steadily for at least the past decade and has heightened dramatically in the past few years. Existing grass-roots efforts at CSU, Chico were enhanced by our regional accreditor’s (Western Association of Schools and Colleges, WASC) new framework for accreditation with its emphasis on “culture of evidence.” This emphasis coincides with the commitment in Chico’s **Strategic Plan for the Future**: “Encourage institutional effectiveness ... by fostering a culture of evidence and accountability through the development of formal assessment and performance measurement systems.” Similarly, Chico’s **Academic Plan** promises a commitment to “demonstrate educational effectiveness” as part of its goals of enhancing “student learning—both inside and outside the classroom.”

Currently, a wide variety of assessment activities are occurring on multiple fronts: at the level of the individual course, the program, and the institution as a whole. Formal institution-wide attempts to organize and systematize these efforts may be traced back to September 2004 when CSU, Chico was accepted to participate in an AAHE-WASC Workshop, titled “Institutional Strategies for Assessing and Improving Student Learning,” held in Glendale, CA. Part of the condition for participation was a pledge signed by members of the President’s Cabinet and the institution’s accreditation liaison officer to fully and enthusiastically consider the intended outcome of the workshop: a plan for assessing and improving student learning that is meaningful, manageable, sustainable and cost effective. Because the workshop was aimed at institutions, AAHE required that institutions send teams of three to eight members; at least one member was to be the institutional officer most directly responsible for assessment of student learning.

**AURA: All University Responsibility for Assessment**

Members of the Chico Team attending the AAHE-WASC Assessment Workshop became founding members of the All University Responsibility for Assessment (AURA) task force charged with the responsibility of providing campus leadership in the assessment of student learning outcomes. AURA activities during the first two years centered on the development of a common set of definitions to be employed in assessment activities, an audit of existing student learning outcome statements using an SLO Request Template, the development criteria for evaluating student learning outcome statements, the provision of feedback on the SLO statements collected and the launching of a Web site to share assessment resources and reporting systems. Members of AURA de facto developed a model of coaching and education in their efforts to use assessment as a tool to achieve program goals and improve student learning. (CFR 2.3; 2.7)

Early on the need for on-going faculty development was recognized as many members of the faculty had little or no exposure to instructional design and/or assessment. The first AURA assessment workshop was conducted by Mary J. Allen10, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at CSU, Bakersfield and former Director of the California State University Institute for Teaching and Learning, on March 23-25, 2005. Dr. Allen had served as the team mentor for the Chico Team participating in the AAHE-WASC Assessment Workshop. Her presentations centered on the articulation of a framework that would provoke discussions of program goals, curricular organization, pedagogy, and student development and focus faculty attention to student learning in particular. This framework was subsequently disseminated through CELT-sponsored workshops and departmental and conference work sessions.

The response to AURA’s initial effort was that most programs began engaging in assessment activities at some level. At the very least, most campus programs began to develop a meaningful program mission statement, along with program outcomes. With further “coaching” from AURA these outcomes were re-cast into measurable ones. Most programs followed this initial engagement with the assessment of at least one program outcome.

Experiences of the first two years of AURA operations also suggested the need for simultaneous consideration of student learning and program/organizational learning. Leaders of AURA and the Academic Program Review Project met routinely to ensure integration of student learning outcomes assessment into the evolving program review guidelines. Linking student learning outcomes assessment with program review is a key effort of the Academic Program Review (APR) task force.

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learning outcomes assessment with program reviews, it was thought, provides an opportunity to address key performance indicators in new and more diagnostic ways. Components of the Learning Outcomes Assessment were incorporated into the academic program review evidentiary exhibits. Members of AURA were invited to make presentations during program review orientations to highlight AURA support, best practices and resource availability to programs. AURA provided student learning assessment grants to programs undergoing five-year program reviews.

**AAC: Academic Assessment Council**

In August of 2007, AURA developed a report on its work to date and composed a set of recommendations for the new Provost, Dr. Sandra M. Flake, as she re-examined the organizational structures and resource allocations for academic program review and the assessment of student learning as recommended by the Capacity and Preparatory Review Visitation Team. Among other recommendations, members of AURA urged the Provost to:

- “Create a position for program assessment at the college and department levels of equal importance to curriculum committees. Assessment coordinators are one option to provide leadership in this work with release time or appropriate workload recognition.”
- “Coordinate the Five-Year Review with program assessment; faculty orientation for five year reviews should include an AURA presentation.”
- “Continue to extend GE assessment to regular program assessment activities.”
- Coordinate the assessment of graduate programs with AURA and the Five Year reviews.”
- Set annual expectations for deans to report on the results of program assessment in their colleges.”

Provost Flake recognized that the lack of resources to engage in meaningful and sustainable assessment—including time to learn about and engage in assessment as well as having the institutional infrastructure to support it—was one of the main barriers to implementing outcomes-based review programs. Accordingly, she reconstituted AURA into the Academic Assessment Council (AAC) with a membership that is located within college deans’ offices and allocated resources both at the level of the college and that of the department for assessment. Dean Office-level assessment officers would serve as coordinators / coaches for the assessment facilitators housed in each of the college departments. (CFR 4.4)

Following the new organizational structure and the recruitment of assessment facilitators, AAC’s first priority was to systematize the collection, storage, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms associated with the annual program assessment reports. After a series of iterations, AAC developed a Program Assessment Report Template that is completed by the department facilitators annually and submitted to the college coordinator. The college coordinator then summarizes the annual assessment activities of all programs within their college and submits the Annual Program Assessment Status Update form to the Provost. The annual status updates are published on the program portfolios Web site along with the program assessment plan. A second major priority of AAC is to provide professional development for assessment coordinators and assessment facilitators. This effort was designed to overcome the barrier of limited understanding of, or expertise in, assessment. Initial development efforts centered on generating a shared conceptual framework and a common language for assessment efforts. Subsequent efforts focused on sharing best practices and providing feedback on individual program efforts via workshops, college-level Web-based Vista learning communities, and the new Assessment of Student Learning Web site.

Significant progress has been recorded in implementing the phases of the AURA / AAC assessment process. Most recent efforts have centered on how to best document the use of assessment results in program improvement decisions. Program and curricular committees now routinely report reviews of assessment analyses and interpretation followed by conversations on program redesign and improvement. The documentation of action plans formulated and executed is beginning to become part of the ‘culture of evidence’ focused on monitoring student learning and intentional efforts at program improvement.
STEPS: Student Tracking, Evaluation & Portfolio System

The last couple of years the University has supported the development of STEPS—the locally grown Student Tracking, Evaluation & Portfolio System. STEPS is a student-built, faculty-led, and administratively designed assessment system that is being extensively used by major programs and Chico’s General Education program. STEPS recently added a process documentation capability that allows academic programs to document all steps in the continuing improvement process for student learning. Program assessment facilitators build the documentation that can also be accessed (read only) by designated administrators and accreditation team members. To ensure relevance and manageability, the design provides facilitators with great flexibility in choosing the nature and scope of their documentation.

Summary

In its Capacity and Preparatory Review Report, the visitation team noted that “Despite some positive developments, such as the establishment of the AURA (All University Responsibility for Assessment) committee, team members were generally still concerned about the lack of widespread progress on analysis and interpretation of data, and the lack of evidence that data are routinely used for programmatic improvement (CFR 2.4 and 2.7)” There was also the recommendations that “CSU, Chico needs to find ways of identifying and committing resources to the program assessment initiative …” (p. 45) The evidence presented in this essay suggests that CSU, Chico has aggressively responded to the expectations and recommendation of the CPR Visitation Team. The campus is actively and systematically engaged in the assessment of student learning within the context of program review. The campus is committing significant resources to ensure that the assessment initiative is manageable and sustainable. There is increasing evidence that assessment practices are coupled with the academic program review process (described next) to inform planning, resource allocation, and evaluation. (CFR 4.7)

A New Framework for Academic Program Review

Since 1971, the CSU Trustees have required that regular, qualitative review of existing programs be conducted by campuses. General education programs as well as degree programs were to be subject to such reviews. Results from the reviews were to be submitted to the Chancellor's Office for summary presentation at the Board of Trustees' January meetings.

CSU, Chico has subjected its non-accredited undergraduate and graduate programs to Trustees-mandated five-year reviews. Early reviews addressed four goals: a) educational quality, b) academic environment, c) creative, scholarly, and scientific endeavors, and d) community service and regional outreach. Later program reviews attempted to more closely tie program review to the strategic plan of the University and evaluated five major areas: 1) creation of high quality learning environments, 2) information literacy, 3) faculty development and scholarly activities, 4) service learning, and 5) performance-based budgeting.

More recently, growing concerns about the quality of American higher education have led to calls for greater accountability and transparency in the performance of colleges and universities. Within that context, Chico recognized that program review processes could play a key role in demonstrating both educational effectiveness and accountability. Such reviews systematize a program's approach to academic quality and educational excellence and provide a framework for managing
quality assurance in program offerings and related educational activities. Accordingly, the campus proposed to refine its Five-Year Program Review processes as part of the Educational Effectiveness Review. (CFR 2.4; 2.6; 2.7)

Traditionally in program reviews, the self-study author used data to describe the program rather than explain what the program does and illustrate how well it does relative to its goals and standards of performance. CSU, Chico proposed to develop a new framework for five-year reviews that would refocus programs toward becoming more systematic and intentional about gathering data about performance and effectiveness and on using the resulting information to continuously improve what the program does. The elements of this new framework were to align under the strategic priorities of the University, the 10 principles of Cornerstones, the principles of the CSU Accountability Process, and the ‘core commitments’ to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness that are embodied in the new WASC accreditation standards.11

A Multi-Phased, Multi-Year Inquiry

CSU, Chico pursued this project as a multi-phased, multi-year inquiry through which, with thoughtful experimentation and testing, a more effective, outcomes-based academic and co-curricular program review model would emerge. In this multi-phased refinement process, the results of a previous phase informed the revision of the next phase’s process and procedures. In this way, both process characteristics and review guidelines were systematically tested and continuously improved over a period of five years. (CFR 4.4)

Undergraduate Program Reviews

The refinement of our academic program review process focused on educational effectiveness by having programs—not the academic units that offer the programs—articulate a collective vision of educational attainment, explain how they organize for learning, and demonstrate their commitment to learning and continuous improvement. The process proceeds from an orientation, to the conduct of a self-study, to a review by an external reviewer, to the articulation of a five-year improvement plan and is completed by a final review committee recommendation to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Throughout the refinement process significant changes were incorporated into the review process:

- The revised program review guidelines identify three content areas—articulating a collective vision, organizing for learning and becoming a learning organization—and six sets of criteria for review—mission and program goals, curriculum, faculty resources, students as learning partners, other learning enabling resources and commitment to learning and continuous improvement.
- The revised guidelines provide Guidelines for Documentation in the form of suggested methods for demonstrating performance related to the content areas and criteria for review.
- The revised guidelines stipulate a set of Required Data Elements to support the program review. These prescribed exhibits encourage a more explicit approach to presenting data about program characteristics and outcomes and foster a more visible reliance on concrete evidence.
- The program review resources include an electronic template for the self-study final report. The format allocates one page per criterion for review. The template first spells out the criterion for review and then asks the program to enter the program’s performance on the CFR, an evidentiary exhibit and a set of reflective comments on the evidence presented.
- The refined review process introduces a more formalized external review process which includes reviewer selection process, preparation for site visit, requirements for the external reviewer report and information about the budget for the external reviewer visit. The External Review Package now also includes an External Reviewer Information Collection and Analysis Guide.
- Following the completion of the self-study and an analysis of the external review report, the program prepares a Concluding Essay in the form of a five-year improvement plan that outlines decisions made, stipulates timelines and identifies expected future outcomes.
- The process is concluded with a Final Review and Approval of the Improvement Action Plan. The Final Review Committee reviews all the evidence and recommends to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs one of four outcomes: affirmation, affirmation with concerns, continuous review and suspension.

11 In the development of program review guidelines and process description we have employed the language of the various accrediting agencies.
• The results of the new academic program review process are now electronically reported via Web-based academic program portfolios.

At the conclusion of Phase V, 37 undergraduate programs will have started and/or completed their academic program review under the new framework.

Figure 2.1

Number of Programs Reviewed in Phases I - V

Reflections on Undergraduate Program Reviews

At the end of each of the phases, participants and external reviewers were asked to suggest improvements for both the review guidelines and process characteristics. A review of these “learning histories” suggests the following lessons have been learned:

• **Change must be managed.** Any attempt at major change must begin with a careful “unfreezing” of the status quo. Awareness, if not urgency, for the need to change must be created, and long-term benefits accruing to the programs must be identified. Without this orientation, change will be resisted, particularly in times of reduced resources. The use of a Context Briefing turned out to be an effective mechanism in this process.

• **Provide the tools and associated training for data collection, data analysis, and data reporting.** We found that, in general, program directors are willing to engage in the review process. At the same time, the requirements of the new process call for a set of skills that is not always present in the program environment. As a result we conducted monthly meetings and workshops to educate participants on all aspects of the review process. Those meetings and workshops also provided day-to-day feedback on what worked and where difficulties were being encountered. Suggestions thus received were translated into Web resources available to all.

• **Provide resources for successful reviews.** Early reaction to the refinement of the review process centered on the additional workload experienced by participants and the new costs of the external review process. The Provost’s Office in Phase III began to make resource allocations in the form of summer support and external reviewer support. This financial commitment demonstrated seriousness of purpose on the part of Academic Affairs.

• **Include college deans early on in the review process.** Dean office support early on in the program review process turned out to be a positive influence. Deans are now routinely invited to program review orientation meetings and are invited to data workshops. Awareness of how data are generated, stored, and presented and then actually working with the data has informed deans about how to apply these data to improvement efforts within their respective colleges.

• **Share prior experiences, if not best practices.** In each phase we invited participants of the previous phase to share their experiences in conducting their program reviews with participants in the next phase. The so-called “Panel of the Experienced” sessions resulted in deeper conversations than we had even hoped for and provided ideas, tools, and data for those reviewing their programs.

• **Demonstrate a sincere commitment** to the academic program review process. This commitment is demonstrated by active and supportive engagement by academic leaders in the review process itself as well as by a visible use of program review data and outcomes in planning and decision making.

• **Integrate and synchronize the academic program review** with other institutional performance measurement systems under the principle of “minimum burden.”
• Institute an academic program portfolio Web site as an additional incentive for programs to complete their program presentation.

The overarching lesson learned in this multi-year effort is that a change in the academic program review process, at least of the scope that we attempted, should be managed as a significant change in departmental / program culture. College deans, department chairs, program directors, support staff and representatives from the Provost’s Office must work as a cohesive team in leading this transition and innovation. (CFR 4.7)

Outcomes of the Refined Program Review Process

Following the completion of the self-study and an analysis of the external reviewer’s insights and suggestions for improvement, the program, in consultation with the dean of the college and chair of the department, develops a five-year improvement plan that outlines decisions made, proposes action items, stipulates timelines and identifies expected results.

The information contained in the self-study, the external reviewer report and the dean-approved improvement action plan forms the basis for the Final Review Team’s recommendation. The Review Team—consisting of an Office of the Provost representatives, college dean, department chair, program director, and a student (optional) – will make a recommendation that can take on one of four options: a) affirmation, b) affirmation with concern, c) continuous review or d) suspension.

An interesting phenomenon was observed as we moved through the phases. It was noticed that as programs and final review teams gained experience with the new review process and its guidelines, team recommendations became more refined and the recommendations of affirmation with concern and continuous review were deemed more and more in the interest of program improvement rather than a disconfirmation of expectations.

Figure 2.2

Academic Program Review Final Recommendations

Graduate Program Reviews

The WASC Capacity and Preparatory Review Visitation Team noted that “Graduate programs are only at the very beginning stages of assessment, developing learning goals and struggling with how this is done and what it means.” (p. 16) As a result, the WASC team left the University with a clear mandate to develop rigorous, comprehensive, and sustained systems of program assessment for its graduate programs. In response to this challenge, the Graduate School, under the direction of Dean Susan E. Place, undertook for the 2007-2008 academic year a concerted, thoughtful, and deliberate effort to begin to institutionalize ongoing formal program assessment within its programs.

Earlier reviews of graduate programs had centered on the collection, analysis, and evaluation of data on 10 performance criteria. As mandates for program capacity and educational effectiveness began to emerge, attempts were made to augment these performance criteria with requirements of mission statements, program goals, student learning outcomes, and assessment plans. While it was recognized that several graduate programs had in place exemplary assessment protocols, the majority of graduate programs were at best in the initial stages of their assessment program development and would need a significant amount of help in developing effective assessment programs tailored to the specific characteristics of their
programs. Led by Mark J. Morlock, a member of the University’s Academic Assessment Council and associate dean of the Graduate School, a schoolwide assessment effort was undertaken with the goal of establishing, for all graduate programs, thoughtfully designed assessment packages to address the newly developed graduate program review guidelines.

As of June 2008, the proportion of graduate programs completing each of the first four elements of their assessment packages is as follows:

![Figure 2.3](image)

The Graduate School is committed to continue its efforts toward the full development of graduate-level program assessment and review. This will involve: a) working to help those programs which have fallen behind to catch up, and b) helping all programs move from a planning stage into the business of actual program assessment and program improvement, and c) develop and publish graduate program portfolios via the Web. To this end, additional workshops are planned to help programs design processes and strategies for actual outcomes assessment as well as for designing processes for "closing the loop" by using assessment results for program improvement. (CFR 2.3; 4.7)

**Summary**

CSU, Chico chose to refine its academic program review as a means of demonstrating its commitment to educational effectiveness and accountability. The project was pursued as a multi-phased, multi-year inquiry that experimented with the components of its program review process. The refined program review process now has criteria for review and guidelines for documentation that move self-studies from program description to program effectiveness analyses and encourage ongoing engagements with issues of program capacity and educational effectiveness. The launching of a one-stop data Web site is fostering a matter-of-fact acceptance of data as tools for decision making. A more uniform electronic reporting of the program review results via Web-based portfolios has aided organizational learning and accountability. The end result, we believe, is a process that forms the basis for sustaining the continued improvement of all academic programs and provides information for program-related planning and decision making.

**Assessing the General Education Program**

General Education (GE) at CSU, Chico is driven by and reflects the values of the University, while at the same time conforming to Title 5 of the State of California Code of Regulations and the directives from the California State University system. Program goals reflect an intention to initiate students into a lifetime of learning, thinking, and acting as healthy, informed, ethically mature and productive citizens in a diverse and complex world. According to EM 99-05, in every GE course, relevant skills of the Core must be applied as essential to the process of mastering content and making applications; moreover, the capstone requirement dictates that nurturing and building upon the skills of the core will continue through the theme courses. (CFR 2.2)
This essay focuses on two recent major efforts to ensure the educational effectiveness of our GE program via assessment activities beyond the course level.

- **GE Core Assessment Projects**: Understanding program level assessment to include assessment of broadly-based foundational student learning outcomes (SLOs), in the most recent review of the program beginning in AY 2005-2006 and continuing into AY 2006-2007, the All University Responsibility for Assessment Committee (AURA) joined forces with the General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) and faculty with content expertise to assess SLOs in each of the four Core areas.

- **GEAC’s Meta-Analysis**: In AY 2007-2008, at the Provost’s request, GEAC conducted a meta-analysis of its own assessment work, summarizing its efforts and making recommendations about the future.

### GE Assessment Projects

#### Figure 2.4

**The Core Assessment Projects**

In academic years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, the campus made a significant departure from our usual GE assessment efforts, moving beyond course assessment to examine foundational skills across a variety of GE courses. The core assessment projects were carried out by four Task Forces, each composed of members of GEAC, AURA, and additional faculty with content expertise and charged with assessing one Core GE area. Task Forces followed a common strategy of working in consultation with faculty to:

- Define SLOs for the Core area.
- Identify GE courses as sites for assessment.
- Identify assignments suitable for embedded assessment.
- Analyze student work and draw conclusions about GE instruction and learning.
- Share the results. (CFR 2.2–2.4; 2.7; 4.7)

#### Area A1: Oral Communication

The Oral Communication Task Force undertook the first serious attempt to determine whether oral communication skills are included in all GE courses and to assess the effectiveness of these efforts. Oral communication goals and SLOs were identified; one goal and three SLOs were selected for measurement in spring 2006. Task Force members constructed a rubric having three rating categories: effective, adequate, and inadequate. Each of 230 samples of student work was evaluated by two scorers, for each of the three SLOs, resulting in the following array of scores.
**Goal:** Students will demonstrate ability to effectively prepare for and deliver public presentations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLO</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>CMST 131 Speech Communication Fundamentals</th>
<th>CMST 132 Small Group Communications</th>
<th>Other GE Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>200 (43%)</td>
<td>65 (46%)</td>
<td>91 (71%)</td>
<td>44 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>191 (42%)</td>
<td>61 (44%)</td>
<td>35 (26%)</td>
<td>99 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>67 (15%)</td>
<td>14 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>49 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>129 (28%)</td>
<td>34 (24%)</td>
<td>60 (47%)</td>
<td>35 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>274 (60%)</td>
<td>76 (54%)</td>
<td>64 (50%)</td>
<td>134 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>57 (12%)</td>
<td>30 (22%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>23 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>135 (29%)</td>
<td>44 (31%)</td>
<td>51 (40%)</td>
<td>40 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>255 (56%)</td>
<td>78 (56%)</td>
<td>71 (55%)</td>
<td>106 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>70 (15%)</td>
<td>18 (13%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>46 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals (per SLO)</strong></td>
<td>460</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the sample of 230 student presentations included in this assessment of oral communication, we appeared to be successful in meeting our goal and SLOs. The majority of presentations evaluated achieved ratings of adequate or effective across the three assessment categories. The A1 classes—which serve predominantly freshmen and sophomores—appear to be doing a good job of addressing the three SLOs evaluated, with 87% -93% (depending on the SLO assessed) performing at or above minimal acceptable standards.

However, it is disheartening to see that participating junior/senior level students are performing no better (in some cases worse) than their counterparts in A1 oral communication classes, particularly given the importance of oral communication skills in their future careers, community, and family life. We need to know more about the extent to which oral communication is stressed in GE upper division/theme classes and in the majors.

Task Force recommendations:

- Refine the oral communication rubric, providing additional clarification and extension of some rating categories.
- Work with coordinators of CMST131 and CMST132 classes to ensure that clarified GE oral communication goals and associated SLOs are being addressed consistently and similarly in the two courses. Integrate use of the rubric into these courses. Use DVDs of presentations collected for this assessment as training tools for instructors in both courses.
- Explore with department chairs the extent to which oral communication is a requirement in GE upper division theme classes, as well as the extent to which such requirements are consistent with clarified GE oral communication goals and SLOs.
- Work with appropriate constituencies to develop a plan for how oral communication should be addressed in GE theme/upper division classes.
- Determine the number of majors on campus that have an oral communication student learning goal/outcome. Explore the consistency of those goals/outcomes with GE oral communication goals/outcomes.

**Area A2: Written Communication**

A writing assignment of at least 1500 words is required in all GE courses, allowing the Written Communication Task Force to pursue direct assessment of student work already being produced. In consultation with faculty, Task Force members derived SLOs for writing in GE and developed a GE Writing rubric. Written work was assessed along three characteristics (Content, Organization and Argumentation, and Grammar and Surface Features) and sorted into three categories (Beginning,
Competent, and Accomplished). Slightly over 500 examples of student writing received two independent ratings for each characteristic. Resulting scores for all participating students are summarized below, with breakout data for first-year students and seniors.

Based on this sample of courses, writing would seem to be a frequent and important part of most GE classes. As a first “snapshot” of writing in GE on our campus, the results raise some interesting and useful questions about the quality of our students’ writing, how writing is taught in GE, how writing assignments are crafted, and our overall understanding of writing at CSU, Chico.

The analysis of assessment scores reveals statistically significant trends in the expected and hoped for direction: seniors in GE courses tend to score higher on all measures of writing performance (Content, Organization and Grammar and Surface Features) than do first-year students. In the context of research on writing, these gains appear respectable but not ideal. While the gains exhibited in writing are heartening, they do not merit complacency with writing instruction on our campus.

Task Force recommendations:

- GE Writing SLOs and rubric should be widely circulated on campus and shared with students to provide clearer expectations of writing in GE.
- GE Writing assessment should be continued at regular intervals for the indefinite future. Future writing assessment efforts should:
  - strive for a more systematic and representative sampling of GE courses;
  - provide stronger, more sustained training for readers.
- Generally speaking, faculty value writing as the sine qua non of an educated individual. Faculty need to align their pedagogical practices with these values and continue to seek out creative, effective ways to engage students in constructive, developmental writing practices. The University needs to provide ongoing faculty development that supports efforts of faculty at all levels to craft effective, appropriate GE writing assignments that balance workload with best practices in writing instruction.

Area A3: Critical Thinking

The Critical Thinking (CT) Task Force itself struggled with defining CT and particularly with reconciling the notions of CT as a set of general skills versus CT as a set of discipline-specific modes of inquiry. Both EO 595 and EM 99-05 provided guidance in defining CT and operationalizing that definition into SLOs and rubric.

A total of 186 pieces of student work were collected from 10 GE courses, including assignments from both lower and upper division GE courses representing a variety of disciplines, with about 55% of the work drawn from Philosophy Department classes. Eight faculty members, drawn largely from the Philosophy Department, participated in evaluating student work.
Student work was read independently by two raters with each piece of student work receiving two separate scores on comprehension and reasoning on a three point scale: 1 = poor, 2 = developing and 3 = competent. Summary results are displayed in the graph below.

Two observations stand out:

- Reasoning scores are statistically significantly lower than comprehension scores. More than two-thirds of the students scored “2” (developing) or higher on comprehension, but only half scored “2” or higher on reasoning. The modal reasoning score is “1,” poor.
- There is a slight, but statistically significant, tendency for seniors to score higher than first-year students. This tendency holds through sophomore and junior years, with a slight overall increase as students progress through their academic careers.

Overall, student performance on CT tasks in GE courses, as assessed, is less than outstanding. Even on comprehension, only about 70% of students scored at acceptable levels or higher. On the reasoning dimension of CT, fully half of students scored at what most faculty would probably deem unacceptably low levels. Students’ comprehension and reasoning skills seem to improve over time, but gains are slight and even seniors performed at only moderately proficient levels on CT assessment.

Task Force recommendations:

- Launch a broad-based effort to define the goals and outcomes we expect in CT and to promote these clarified goals and outcomes across the GE curriculum.
- Develop pedagogical strategies for more effective teaching of CT, including providing CT workshops on concrete strategies to elicit self-reflective CT in student work.
- Continued, ongoing efforts to assess our students’ CT ability. Only through ongoing assessment can we determine if we are getting any closer to reaching our goal of graduating highly competent critical thinkers from CSU, Chico.

Area A4: Mathematics

With adoption of EM 99-05, mathematics at CSU, Chico became a core area, reflecting campus recognition of the central nature of mathematics in GE and an understanding that GE mathematics is not a culminating experience. Indeed, GE mathematics forms the foundation for Quantitative Reasoning (QR), which can be defined as the application of mathematics to describe, analyze, and solve authentic problems in context. While EM 99-05 strongly implies that mathematical content should be distributed throughout the GE program, informal communication with upper-division GE instructors suggested that, with few exceptions, there is very little QR in these courses; consequently, assessment data comes largely from area A4 courses.

The Task Force crafted a probability task and a calculus task and sought faculty volunteers to imbed these tasks in their courses. Since GE mathematics faculty placed high priority on several attitudinal SLOs, with assistance from Institutional Research, the Task Force developed a student survey to complement the mathematics tasks.

Results from the probability task indicate some statistically significant differences between courses and across populations:

- Females were more successful than males.
- Students who reported having taken a developmental mathematics course did not score as well as those exempt from developmental mathematics.
The calculus task was a standard related-rates problem appearing on the common final exam; 57% of the 100 students participating earned at least 3 of 4 possible points, with a mean score of 2.81. There were no statistically different levels of performance in the groups examined. There was moderate correlation between a student’s score on the problem and the student’s grade in the class.

Survey data indicates that, with the exception of calculus participants, most students in the sample experienced no previous college-level mathematics coursework; moreover, while many business statistics and calculus students will take at least one more mathematics class, most other students are in their terminal mathematics class. This confirms the faculty impression that many of our students receive much of their college-level mathematics education from the one course they complete to satisfy the GE mathematics requirement.

Task Force recommendations:

- Establish campus-wide expectations and benchmarks for QR.
- Embed QR in courses across the curriculum. We do students a disservice when we avoid QR simply because students find it difficult. Like writing skills, QR skills need to be reinforced and developed over time and in a variety of settings, both in the majors and in GE.
- Provide and support professional development opportunities in QR across the disciplines.

GEAC’s Meta-Analysis

In AY 2007-2008, at the request of the Provost, GEAC conducted a broad-based review of CSU, Chico’s GE program in order to summarize GEAC’s assessment efforts to date and to make recommendations about the future. GEAC’s meta-analysis draws on information from three sources: the Core assessment projects, focus group interviews with chairs and faculty, and a GEAC review of previously completed course reports. (CFR 4.7)

Focus Groups – In AY 2005-2006, GEAC conducted focus-group interviews with chairs, tenured and tenure-track faculty, and lecturers in each college. When asked to describe negative aspects of GE review efforts on campus, faculty listed a number of issues, including:

- Too much attention is paid to details and not enough to assessment of GE as a program.
- There is no obvious use of all the accumulated data.
- GEAC only addresses what is wrong, providing no reinforcement or reward for jobs well done.

In meetings with faculty across campus, comments like those above vastly outweighed more positive comments about GEAC or the review process.

Review of Course Reports

Each GEAC member reviewed 10 course reports from a wide sample representing all areas of GE, including upper-division themes. For each of the 80 courses reviewed, GEAC asked a common set of questions about assessment of the course. Review of these course reports indicates strong faculty investment in the GE courses they teach. They regularly reflect on
their teaching and make changes to syllabi and assignments based on both feedback from students and innovations in their fields. More specifically, GEAC noted:

- Assessment plans generally connected SLOs to the overall goals of the GE program.
- Assessment methods favored indirect over direct assessments of outcomes.
- While faculty reflected on the direct and indirect assessment results they gathered, with some exceptions, the data did not convincingly demonstrate that student learning took place.
- Changes were made to courses after careful consideration of assessment results.

This review indicates faculty belief that reflection about course content and organization and frequent revisions to a class are integral parts of teaching. Faculty will engage in both reflection and improvement whether the assessments that were supposed to support them were direct or indirect, and indeed whether any assessment has taken place at all. Thus changes in teaching and learning in GE seem not to be motivated or shaped very meaningfully by the assessment process.

A good deal of the work in assessment reports focused on teaching, not learning. Generally faculty were eloquent describing the context of a particular course: its evolution, approaches to teaching it, changes in course content or student populations, and so on. The courses themselves seem excellent: intriguing, deep, meaningful, occasionally interdisciplinary. Course activities generally offer a useful mix of lecture and discussion and theory and application. The range of courses in GE is an indicator of the breadth of faculty interest and their desire to take their research into the classroom.

GEAC’s recommendations:

- Develop a course review process, focusing solely on student learning, that encourages faculty to view ongoing assessment as a key aspect of good teaching and that recognizes and rewards faculty buy-in and best practices.
- Establish workshops on pedagogical innovation in GE.
- Continue to periodically review overall program effectiveness.
- The GE Program should be reviewed and revised:
  - An external consultant should be brought in to review the GE program.
  - An all-campus Task Force should be convened to revise EM 99-05, a process that the MOU mandates for the end of every review cycle. The Task Force should take the recommendations from the external consultant as their starting point.
  - A separate Task Force should be convened to examine curriculum and pedagogy of the GE program to make recommendations to the provost and faculty regarding GE reform/renewal.

Summary

The four GE Area A Task Forces, in consultation with faculty colleagues, made good progress in defining SLOs in the core areas of GE, as well as in creating rubrics helpful in assessing student work in some of the core areas. The Task Forces recommended the elaboration of SLOs and rubrics be extended to other domains of GE in order to clarify objectives in GE instruction and to provide the basis for ongoing assessment of GE at the course level and beyond. Moreover, the Task Forces recommended that the area-level assessment process, or a similar process, be extended to other domains of GE, not as a substitute for course-level review, but as an important support and addition to course review.

Because GEAC focuses almost exclusively on course-level assessment, it rarely addresses questions about overall student learning, excellence in teaching, or the content or shape of the GE program. With the heavy "paper load" of course assessment reports, there is little or no time on GEAC to do important work related to the current and future shape of the program. To what extent is our program built on what faculty want to teach rather than what the campus community feels is most important in terms of learning? Is the program at all constrained by "legacy courses" that are only taught because they used to be taught by others? GEAC is not currently in a position to answer such questions. However, GEAC’s Meta-Analysis does provide recommendations that could be used to implement a systematic, meaningful and sustainable program-level assessment of GE.

Taken together, the assessment projects done to date provide a rich body of data to inform discussion of the shape and content of CSU, Chico’s GE program in the future. Indeed, they provide a solid foundation for the recently announced Re-Visioning of General Education Initiative. (CFR 4.6)
THEME 3: THE INNOVATIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Innovative Use of Technology

The California State University, Chico has a long history of embracing technology for innovative instruction and effective administration and communication. Over the years, technology plans have been designed to assure that campus IT initiatives were targeted to support the Chico Strategic Plan for the Future. Prioritization and coordination of technology planning and implementation was to ensure that Chico State students, faculty, staff and administrators have the combination of skills, knowledge, and technology to thrive in a technology-rich future.

Within this context, CSU, Chico proposed to review existing approaches and techniques and experiment with the use of academic technology to achieve student learning, student engagement and cost savings (Institutional Proposal, p. 11). Accordingly, in this essay, we first review our experience with the Learning Productivity Projects (LPPs) which led to a campus effort to develop the Exemplary Online Instruction (EOI) program—now driven by our nationally recognized Rubric for Online Instruction (ROI).

Academic Technology: Learning Productivity Projects

How can we use new educational technologies to enhance student learning and help them achieve their goals? How can we do so in a way that would allow us to serve a greater number of students with the same resources? To help answer these and related questions on the use of academic technology, the Chancellor’s Office of the California State University system began a yearly allocation of $150,000 in 1996 to each CSU campus. At CSU, Chico the funds were used (1996-2002) to develop a program of competitive proposals requiring both an assessment plan and sharing the results with colleagues. These Learning and Productivity Projects (LPPs) began a long history of structured development in the effective use of academic technology. (CFR 3.7)

The keys to student success identified in the projects were the same across disciplines, irrespective of the technology used, namely: regular class attendance, good time management and study skills, a strong motivation to learn, and a dynamic, well-organized instructor. We also found that regular, structured, and intensive discussions with other faculty enhanced faculty productivity, personal confidence, and professional development. Our formal meetings gave faculty opportunities to report and compare projects and experiments across disciplines. As the online arena emerged in several of the LPPs, we
learned that the development of Web-based materials for teaching took more time and effort than most faculty anticipated.

**Exemplary Online Instruction**

As we moved into the 21st century there was a conscious shift on campus from experimenting with the use of academic technology to strategically and effectively implementing it as a systematic way to enhance student learning. To define effective practices in the use of online technology, a Rubric for Online Instruction was written and developed by a committee composed of faculty members, academic technology staff, administrators, and a student. Once the ROI was in place, the Exemplary Online Instruction (EOI) awards were instituted to recognize courses and instructors who demonstrated that excellence. Further peer recognition of faculty exhibiting exemplary online instruction came in the form of showcasing their work in public forums, such as the annual Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Conference and poster displays in the Technology and Learning Program lab and online. (CFR 3.6)

Two examples that highlight what CSU, Chico has learned from the LPPs and the EOI program and showcase innovative approaches to the use of technology are the School of Nursing and the Department of Education Credential Program.

**Lessons Learned from Managing Online Programs: School of Nursing**

The School of Nursing uses technology to expand access to their programs. They have been able to offer baccalaureate and master’s programs throughout our extensive service region in response to nursing shortages. Their challenge was to reach students in 24/7 work settings that do not have the luxury of taking time from work to meet the scheduling demands of synchronous or on-campus classes. Prior to the online program, the RN to BSN program admitted an average of five RNs per year. Now they admit 40 per year, with waiting lists for the beginning course. The MSN program previously admitted 5-8 students in the on-campus program and now, with the online format, they are admitting 15-20 students. They have recently been approved to offer an online LVN to BSN program which will admit 20 students compared with three a year in the current on-campus program.

The program has extensive data on learning outcomes on the National League for Nursing Achievement Test for community health nursing, which compares the students who completed the community health theory coursework on campus with the RNs in the online program.

![Figure 3.1](image)

**Nursing Achievement Test - Mean Scores**

- **Framework**: Classroom - 42.3, Online - 44.2
- **Community as Client**: Classroom - 35.3, Online - 36.9
- **Total**: Classroom - 77.7, Online - 81.2
For the years 2001-2004, 66 online students and 179 students on campus completed the test. The online students outperformed the on-campus students, with mean scores of 81.15 compared to 77.66 (p<.001).

Other parameters evaluated included student satisfaction with the online program, satisfaction with cost, and satisfaction with the online learning technology and support services. Students in the online programs were very satisfied that student learning objectives were achieved, with higher satisfaction scores than the on-campus students. Nearly 75% of our online students lived over 50 miles from campus, so we are assured that the online format does provide access to distant students.

Feedback from students indicated they valued the online components, but also wanted some on-campus time and opportunities to meet the faculty and peers face-to-face. In response we have built a full day of initial orientation on campus for all of our online programs. That orientation includes meeting with staff from the Technology and Learning Program and the Library, to learn the intricacies of the online formats, and access to online library resources. Following that orientation, students will come to campus for one to three class meetings during the remaining semesters. This student experience with distance learning mirrors the historical satisfaction levels of Chico’s distance learning students.

Figure 3.2

Percent of Student Satisfied or Very Satisfied with CSU, Chico Distance Education

Three Lessons Learned in Technology: Department of Education

In response to changes in the state teaching credentials standards, in 2005-2006 the Department of Education decided it needed to create a stand-alone course with objectives that addressed each element of the standards. The selection was based upon 2004-2005 data from primarily two sources: the CSU Exit Survey, in which candidates exiting the program indicated how well prepared they felt to use technology for instruction, and the CSU Systemwide Evaluation of Teachers, in which first-year teachers from CSU, Chico and their employers indicated their perceptions of Chico graduates’ preparedness to use Educational Technology. The data for most programs indicated that Chico graduates perceived themselves to be less well prepared to teach using technology than the overall CSU System average.

In a systematic approach to course redesign, data from 2005-2006 were analyzed and an action plan for program improvement was developed. Based on the findings, the plan for improvement was to: 1) analyze technology matrix to identify where technology goals are currently met in coursework; 2) articulate where technology goals could be met throughout program coursework; 3) change course assignments as needed to reflect this articulation; 4) continue to collect data. As a result of the action plan, a series of meetings that focused upon technology were held. A plan was developed for the redesign of the existing course and where and how to infuse additional opportunities for application of technology throughout coursework (Teaching with Technology Flow Chart). The National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS) were used to help methods instructors see examples of the types of learning activities in which K-12 students might
engage. NETS includes indicators of achievement at certain stages in primary, elementary, and secondary education, and that success in meeting the indicators is predicated on students having regular access to a variety of technology tools. Skills are introduced and reinforced over multiple grade levels before mastery is achieved. Current technologies being used by classroom teachers were shared. The examples were provided in an effort to bring the standards to life and demonstrate the variety of activities possible. The flow chart included a series of “mini-workshops” that would provide candidates with continued practice and support as they completed technology-based assignments throughout their course work. Even though many of the improvements are yet to be implemented, preliminary results indicate that changes in course and program as well as an investment in new technologies have led to improved results.

**Figure 3.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Instruction in using computer tech. for classroom instruction</th>
<th>Chico Program</th>
<th>Systemwide</th>
<th>Total Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>N: 159 Very or Somewhat: 72.3% A Little or Not: 27.7%</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3114</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>N: 152 Very or Somewhat: 84.2% A Little or Not: 15.8%</td>
<td>4011</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional development and mentoring opportunities for our full-time and part-time instructors were essential to the success of the redesign effort. Opportunities were sought during scheduled monthly department meetings, campus training sessions, and national educational technology experiences. One of our faculty members developed a framework and structure for an online community area for our department using the University's learning management system. Today the space is well used by faculty for advising, information, forms, discussions, and even long distance committee work. Training sessions such as Wikis, Blogs, and Podcasting in Education have been conducted by department faculty for their colleagues.

The Department of Education has learned that in order to teach with technology there must be technology. In the field of Education, state-of-the-art technology at the University must mirror the technologies that our candidates are encountering in their K-12 settings. Therefore, in addition to regularly updating equipment such as wireless labs, we have invested in Smartboards and Clickers so that faculty can model the use of technology in their instruction and methods courses. Furthermore, the Department of Education supports the continual upgrade of computers and printers for faculty and staff. LCD projectors, wireless laptops, digital cameras, and current software are also purchased and used in our teacher education classrooms and with our K-16 partnerships.

**Innovative Use of Technology in the Large GE Courses**

**Natural Sciences 101/102**

In spring 2005, observing a growing societal indifference to the state of science and a lack of understanding of the scientific process, the College of Natural Sciences began to discuss a major redesign of two key courses in the general education science curriculum. Our dean noted “we only have two three-unit courses in which to make a significant impact on how the majority of Chico State students perceive and understand science.” The vision for the course redesign was to transform two existing courses into one two-semester course that integrates life and physical sciences, uses the environment as a unifying theme and demonstrates a positive effect on students' perceptions and views of science.
The stated goals of the project followed recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences including that such courses should: a) meet the needs of students from diverse educational backgrounds and experiences, b) have rich and meaningful laboratory components, c) explore the unifying concepts and processes of science, d) be interdisciplinary in nature and focus, e) provide case studies that examine real problems and applications, f) emphasize the evolving processes of scientific thought and inquiry, and g) employ alternative instruction in an effort to revitalize the teaching of science.

The courses identified for redesign were BIOL 101: Concepts of Biology and GEOS 130: Introduction to Environmental Science. In order to make connections between Natural Sciences (NSCI) 101/102 as seamless as possible, it was agreed that the two courses would have exactly the same student learning objectives. This was only possible by making a major shift in thinking about the goals of general education science courses, moving away from content-driven objectives and toward more global objectives focused on understanding the nature of science.

In spring 2005, the college formed an interdisciplinary committee which began developing student learning outcomes and curriculum for Natural Sciences 101, a redesign of GEOS 130, which would focus on the physical sciences while also making connections with life sciences. The syllabus for NSCI 101: Introduction to the Earth’s Environment resolved into three modules focused on energy, water, and climate change, with a final module providing an application of these topics as they influence biological communities of ecosystems; the final module also serves as a bridge connecting the physical and life sciences. By modifying an existing course, the committee was able to pilot the new course as special sections of GEOS 130 in fall 2005. The focus of redesign efforts shifted to BIOL 101 and NSCI 102 in spring 2006. With an annual enrollment near 900 students and a drop, withdrawal, failure (DWF) rate of about 26%, BIOL 101 had a reputation for being a bottleneck in general education. In spring of 2006, an interdisciplinary committee developed student learning outcomes and curriculum for NSCI 102: Introduction to Living Systems.

In the original format, a professor or lecturer typically covered the lecture component, while the lab component was covered by graduate teaching assistants. One project goal was to use technology to make better use of faculty expertise by delivering some of the content electronically and freeing the faculty member to supervise exploratory activities of the students.

An analysis of course grades for AY 2006-2007 showed that NSCI 102 students earned significantly higher course grades than BIOL 101 students; the mean grade in NSCI 102 was 2.7 versus a mean grade of 2.2 in BIOL 101. The difference is much more apparent when comparing the Drop, Withdrawal, Failure Rate BIOL 101 and NSCI 102, with NSCI 102 results clearly superior. Of course, it should be noted that there could be many explanations for these differences, not the least of which is that different faculty were typically teaching the different formats. In some cases, they have been able to make more refined comparisons of student performance on specific learning objectives in both of the formats.

### Figure 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>BIOL 101 – Old Format</th>
<th>NSCI 102 – New Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DWF Rate</td>
<td>Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>25.98%</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2007</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is no doubt that the creation and rapid implementation of the new courses resulted in increased workload for faculty and staff; of course, much of this increase in workload has been due to curriculum development and gaining familiarity with new technology components of the courses. Moreover, in the transition phases, departments had to schedule and run two versions of the existing courses. Because of these factors, the curriculum redesign effort has yet to meet its cost-of-instruction goals. As more students shift to the new format and the interdisciplinary committee explores possible modifications in the course structure, the cost of instruction will be monitored through the Insight reporting service.

The Natural Science redesign represents a major shift in the science GE curriculum. The success of the project depended on innovative curriculum redesign enabled by innovative use of academic technology. This redesign effort is a continuous process with annual assessment leading to further curricular adjustment and improvement. (CFR 3.7)

UNIV 101

CSU, Chico’s First-Year Seminar (FYS), UNIV 101, serves 500 to 600 incoming students each year in approximately 23 sections (enrollment per section is 25 to 30). The majority of students taking the course are undeclared, or they have declared a major they are uncertain they will pursue.

In 2006, the Dean of Undergraduate Education, hired an FYE director whose most important responsibility was to examine UNIV 101, identify problems, suggest solutions, and undertake a course revision process. The director, following a semester of ethnographic work in four UNIV 101 sections and a follow-up case study of seven 101 students into their spring term, concluded that the course evidenced, among others, all of these problems:

- Lack of multi-section uniformity in course content, design, and purpose.
- Use of inconsistent content and pedagogy across sections.
- Lack of meaningful academic content.
- Lack of consistent quality in students’ introduction to and use of WebCT Vista.
- Failure to acknowledge what students do know about technology and the inability to engage them in meaningful conversations about the links between technology and learning.

In an attempt to address these issues, the director worked closely with members of Technology and Learning Program (TLP). In fall 2007 work included focus on the Online Resource, which was our most successful technological intervention in UNIV 101. This resource provided all sections of the course with a common text, some common assignments, improved academic content, and an authentic reason to introduce students to our online learning management system, WebCT Vista.

Focus groups were used to collect data to form a baseline benchmark on the understanding and perceptions of technology in learning amongst first-year students. One hundred and ten students in the focus groups on technology responded to these prompts in groups of eight to ten:

- What technologies do you presently use and how do you use them?
- How might these technologies be used for educational purposes?
- Describe your experiences with technology use in courses at CSU, Chico.
- Imagine a university that includes all of the technologies you would like to have available to you. What technologies would you want to have available on campus? How might those technologies be used by the university in ways that would engage you and help you learn more effectively?

The assessments of students’ attitudes toward and knowledge of technology use was quite informative. It had been assumed that because of extensive use of technology and comfort with rapid technological changes our students would be technologically sophisticated and imaginative. In fact, our focus group work revealed that most of them could barely think or talk about technology at all. For them it is a given, like air. Our focus groups suggest that our first-year students find the subject of technology uninteresting but the presence of technology absolutely necessary—largely for social reasons, however. They do not think in innovative ways about the development of technology; they do not seem to be aware of the impact of technology on the world for good or ill; and they think of the uses of technology in almost completely personal ways because they use it primarily for social connectivity. Accordingly, it was decided that courses in the first-year curriculum should systematically and recursively address the importance of technology’s impact on economies, ecologies, learning, marketing, interpersonal relationships, invention, and so on. Allowing students to continue to see technology as a given obscures the complex situations arising from widespread human uses of sophisticated technologies in the 21st century.
How issues related to a highly-technologized society should be addressed in UNIV 101 is still under consideration, but FYE remains committed to developing a strand of instruction in UNIV 101 that asks students to consider the ways smart tools affect learning. One finding in the focus groups alarmed us sufficiently to prompt additional research into students’ practices with handheld devices. In focus groups, up to half of students in many groups claimed that they use a handheld device during class periods about 90% of class time. In other words, although students show up for class, they are not consciously in the room enough for attendance to matter. A preliminary follow-up study was designed and conducted in two large lecture classes populated by first year students during spring 2008. That study showed that about 3% of students in a large lecture used handheld devices almost continuously. Students’ self-report in the focus groups thus seems to be an overestimate, although we are uncertain that behavior was not altered from first to second semester. We will therefore conduct this study again in the fall 2008. (CFR 3.7)

Next Steps – Humanities and Fine Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences

In the fall of 2008 the drivers for curriculum transformation changed significantly in response to budget reductions. Increasing class sizes are stretching not only faculty resources, but physical resources as well in a classroom inventory built around a lower SFR paradigm. In response the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and Behavioral and Social Sciences are partnering with Information Resources to break both the space and time constraints for large multi-section courses using existing distance learning technology. The teams are focusing on a combination of asynchronous and synchronous (Vista/Wimba) that do not require a radical change in pedagogy and leverage current delivery systems and experienced staff. We accelerated our development schedule to try and get two pilot sections of large GE courses delivered in this mode in spring 2009. These sections will provide live experience to inform design teams who will redesign courses for the fall.

Summary

There are many “great stories” of continuous learning and innovation in the use of technology at California State University, Chico. The examples selected for this essay represent the variety, scope, and sequence of technology innovation at Chico ranging from undergraduate, to credential and graduate levels. The knowledge gained was used to develop a clear vision of our technology needs. Next, we developed goals and action plans followed by processes for evaluating our progress in implementing those plans. This cycle has allowed us to continually advance our campus technology and to become innovative along the way. It has also allowed us to systematically make campuswide technology decisions and apply them to individual courses, collaborative efforts by programs and departments, and to significantly redesign large GE classes. We look forward to the many technology opportunities that are now before us.
Towards Increased Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability

To address the specific recommendations proffered by the Capacity and Preparatory Review Visiting Team and, in the process, further develop the evidentiary bases for ‘Telling the Chico Story,’ we added the theme of ‘increased institutional effectiveness and accountability’ to the Educational Effectiveness Review.

The Commission’s Action Letter noted that “CSU, Chico has structured a well-developed strategic plan with priorities that are embedded in everything the institution does.” (Letter p.4) While there was much to commend, the Team did express two concerns. “First, while the strategic plan fully informs resource allocations within Academic Affairs, it is not clear from the interviews on campus that the plan has the same importance for units outside Academic Affairs. Second, and much more important, there is no evidence of a series of performance indicators attached to the activities identified under the six priorities of the plan; without these indicators, the University would be unable to demonstrate that they have met the desired goals under these overarching priorities.” (Report p. 39)

To address these concerns and to demonstrate Chico’s continuing commitment to more evidence-based planning and decision making, the campus chose, as part of its Educational Effectiveness Review, to:

- Further align strategic plans at university, divisional, and department / unit level.
- Develop and link performance indicators at university, divisional, and department / unit levels.
- Develop a new warehouse structure with associated business intelligence tools.
- Develop a Web-based communication / reporting infrastructure that enhances organizational feedback and learning.

Further Strategic Alignment

Chico’s stated value of “We are ‘One University’ where … common goals define our work together and the spirit of its engagement” underscores the importance of strategic alignment. Alignment throughout our institution is essential if we are to achieve our mission and strategic priorities.

This alignment takes place in a number of directions. First, there is the alignment of the institution’s mission to the employee base. One of the hallmarks of high quality and high morale institutions is the alignment of individual values and goals with those of the institution. This process, referred to here as “cascading,” is complex because of the sheer number of employees and type of governance involved. Second, sometimes overlooked, is the “upward” alignment to the California State University and beyond. Both types of alignment are to be addressed.

CSU, Chico has adopted the “cascading model of strategic alignment” as a framework for managing its alignment processes. (See next page). As a result, its alignments are intentional, iterative and conducive to benefits that go well beyond establishing strategic goals and objectives. Each vice president continually assesses whether or not the activities of her / his division align with the mission and priorities of the University and reports on progress and accomplishments at each Senior Management Group meeting. (CFR 4.2)

The Academic Plan

At the spring 2007 Academic Affairs Retreat, newly appointed Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Sandra M. Flake, launched an extensive strategic planning and alignment effort by appointing a University Strategic Plan – Academic Plan Mapping Group and charging it with the responsibility of initiating the 2007-2012 Academic Plan. In its initial report to the Council of Academic Deans on June 26, 2007, the Mapping Group reviewed the Strategic Planning Framework at CSU, Chico, proposed its own Strategic Alignment Model and shared the results of an initial mapping exercise.
These materials provided the foundation for a year-long iterative process of solicitation and consultation through meetings, ThinkTank sessions, GroupSystem session, mini-retreats (with directors and academic department chairs), fall / spring retreats, public forums and public feedback periods. As the collaborative planning efforts took place, the Mapping Group began to focus simultaneously on bringing about alignment of proposed goals and strategies by formulating an Academic Affairs Performance Management Program. This Program maps proposed Academic Affairs goals and strategies to the University Strategic Plan, identifies intersections with the other divisions of the University, and defines Academic Affairs lead responsibilities for individual strategies. Unit managers will report annual progress to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs as part of their annual review.

On May 9, 2008, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Sandra M. Flake, introduced the 2007-2012 Academic Plan to the campus community and its external audiences. She noted:

“This Academic Plan provides an initial roadmap for our journey to excellence in instruction, research, creative activity, and public service. In it, we identify five Academic Affairs goals and the associated strategies through which we support the university’s mission and strategic priorities. We expect to realize these goals over the next five years, that is, by the time of the University’s 125th anniversary. Each fall semester I will share with you an Academic Plan Report in which I will report to you the progress we, as an academic community, have made on implementing the goals of this Plan.

The Business and Finance Plan

The Business and Finance division launched a strategic alignment effort, stemming from a division strategic plan effort kicked-off during the November 2007 division retreat. The vice president’s managers formed the planning group for the new plan. Under the leadership of the new Vice President for Business and Finance, Lorraine B. Hoffman, the Division of Business and Finance Strategic Plan for 2007-2012 was finalized in fall 2008 and shared online.

Each goal of the division strategic plan purposely aligns directly with the goals in the campus strategic plan. Departments then collaboratively develop strategic plans that will be folded into the division’s annual reporting process. The annual reporting process identifies objectives, key performance indicators, and implementation plans as well as cross-divisional initiatives.
The Student Affairs Plan

The Vice President for Student Affairs has been very intentional in aligning the goals and values of Student Affairs with the Strategic Priorities that have been set forth by the President. During the months of June and July the Division of Student Affairs conducted a series of retreats, which addressed the contextual framework of a campus strategic and master plan, a planning for the future needs of our students—including learning outcomes and assessment—as well as the development of a five year strategic plan for the division. Through an iterative process of consultation and review, the division of Student Affairs now has its own strategic plan and has explicitly recognized its contributions to the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities of the University. Directors must show how departmental efforts are linked to the strategic priorities of the University, Chico’s Strategic Plan and how findings from learning outcomes and assessments help shape and define current and future initiatives set forth by their departments.

The Advancement Plan

Vice President Richard Ellison led an all-day retreat exercise with all division managers in July 2008 to identify the areas in which University Advancement connects with the University Strategic Plan. After the retreat, a strategic planning committee was formed to lead the management group through the planning process. The process used campus resources such as GroupSystems to identify three to five strategic goals that directly align with corresponding University Strategic Plan goals. The resulting University Advancement Strategic Plan 2008-2013 provides a framework from which all managers and unit directors within University Advancement will draft individual action plans on an annual basis. The Annual Advancement plans identify programmatic and advancement goals and priorities and include a roadmap for how each director will accomplish these goals. The document submitted specifically cites the University Strategic Plan goal a project is linked to and describes how the success of a project will be measured. Directors are evaluated against these self-reported criteria at the end of each fiscal year. The University Advancement Strategic Plan 2008-2013 as well as Advancement Action plans will become an interactive Web page on the University Advancement Web site.

Towards Linked Performance Indicators

In the section, Strategic Planning and Resource and Data Alignment of its Action Letter, the Commission urges the University “to establish performance indicators related to each of the priorities of the strategic plan . . .” The Visitation Team, in its report, had noted that “Chico had not developed a true culture of evidence through a university-wide strategic management system.” (p. 40) The Team did note, however, the “commitment to achieving the goal of enterprise knowledge and information management systems.” Chico viewed these recommendations as validation of its chosen direction and is pleased to report, as part of its Educational Effectiveness Review, the following progress in the interrelated areas of developing performance indicators, developing new data warehouse structures and Web-based communication / reporting services. (CFR 4.3)

The University Strategic Plan Measurement Plan

As stated in its Institutional Proposal, Chico views the WASC reaccreditation process as an aid “… in further institutionalizing a ‘culture of evidence’ in which performance indicators inform and drive institutional improvement and decision making.” The Council for Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability, the de facto WASC Steering Committee, has continued its work on the development of performance indicators for the University Strategic Plan.

As part of this effort, the Knowledge Management Infrastructure Team (KMIT) was formed to develop key components and processes in support of the campus Knowledge Management Initiative and to address the recommendations of the WASC review team. The charge to KMIT, a group of functional managers and technical staff representing all divisions of the University, included development of:

- A process to identify, collect and store data to support identified campus strategic measures.
- Reports to be used campus-wide for evidence-based decision making.
- A centralized Web location where the campus community could have easy access to data and reports.
- A Web-based CSU, Chico Annual Report Card.

In the past two years KMIT has made significant progress on all charges, especially on the identification of performance measures aligned to the University strategic plan, the development of a data collection process utilizing the enterprise data warehouse, and the implementation of the first CSU, Chico Strategic Plan Annual Report Card. (CFR 4.5)
The Academic Affairs Measurement Plan

In her May 9, 2008 memorandum to the campus, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Sandra M. Flake expressed appreciation for the collaborative effort and thoughtful dialogue and discussion that had gone into the development of the Academic Plan. She then set the stage for its next phase:

> The next step will include the development of measures by which we can annually report progress. The first measures will be benchmarks from which we start. Each fall semester I will share with you an Academic Plan Report in which I will report to you the progress we, as an academic community, have made on implementing the goals of the Academic Plan.

Thus, commenced a process of developing performance indicators that, similar to the Academic Plan development process, was characterized by discussion / workshop sessions at mini-retreats, retreats, ThinkTank exercises and public forums. Given the consensus around the goals and strategies, the focus now was on defining the measurement architecture, the design and selection of measures and the building an implementation plan. On January 30, 2009, Provost Flake will share her first Academic Plan Update with the campus community.

The Business and Finance Measurement Plan

Many departments in the division of Business and Finance have been tracking, reviewing and reporting operational statistics, quality improvement initiatives, and satisfaction survey data for more than a decade. The new division strategic plan provided an opportunity to reassess these measures and to determine their continued appropriateness as performance indicators in support of the new division and campus scorecards. As existing measures were reviewed for their fit with the new division strategic plan, new measures were also developed to better ensure progress towards objectives and strategic goals. Any data provided for the campus scorecard by the division must also be tracked in the division scorecard, as well as the annual report of the department which owns the campus data. The division scorecard is posted online via the division’s strategic planning Web site.

To accomplish this, each department will submit a department annual report (or scorecard) that notes key performance indicators and operational statistics, program evaluation and achievements for the past year. Additionally, the report will include an implementation plan based on departmental strategic plan objectives for the upcoming year, as well as list cross-division initiatives. The focus of the new format is to systemically use data to foster evidence-based planning and decision making.

The Student Affairs Measurement Plan

Every department within the Division of Student Affairs has gathered data through various performance indicators, such as satisfaction surveys, point of service surveys, utilization statistics and quality improvement programs. The results of these indicators allow departments to address the needs of our students, a means by which we make programmatic changes to allow for better services to an ever changing student population. To further improve our ability to gather pertinent and relative information we have enlisted the services of Student Voice.

Student Voice is a comprehensive assessment platform for higher education. Directors have the ability to conduct quality assessment initiatives, network with member campuses for collaboration purposes and have access to best practices within their specific area. To date, departments within the Division of Student Affairs have participated in well over 100 assessment surveys through the use of Student Voice.

During the past academic year Directors have developed Program Effectiveness Indicators, which are being used, in part, to determine the overall effectiveness of the respective departments. These indicators will also allow departments to make programmatic changes to better meet the needs of our student population.

The Advancement Measurement Plan

In March 2005, the CSU Board of Trustees adopted a set of guiding principles that measures the productivity of, and investment in advancement operations on all 23 campuses. CSU, Chico University Advancement provides quantitative data on performance and investment indicators for the previous fiscal year for two major reports annually. The Voluntary Support of Education, which measures total fundraising by constituent category (alumni, parents, friends, corporations, foundations) and gift type is submitted to the Council for Aid in Education in October, ranks the institution’s advancement...
performance at the state and national level with institutions of comparable size. The Advancement Expenditure Report, which measures state general fund and private dollars spent on the campus advancement operation as a whole on Alumni Relations, Communication, and Fundraising, is submitted to the Chancellor’s Office in December. Many of the key performance and investment indicators contained in these reports have been incorporated into the University’s Annual Report Card.

Within the division of University Advancement, all directors in central advancement submit key performance indicators as a part of their annual Advancement Action plans. These measurements are reviewed annually by the Vice President and Senior Associate Vice President to assist with decision-making related to resource allocation and programmatic direction. In addition, all units and directors in University Advancement will be required to select standard measurements for their area that allow for data collection and evaluation. These measurements will be incorporated with the corresponding action plan and put on the Strategic Plan section of the University Advancement Web site. The division expects to have all measurements identified and benchmark data collected by late spring 2009.

A New Data Warehouse Structure

The Visitation Team noted in its report that “The University has been able to amass a tremendous amount of data and has, in many cases, made these data available to key decision makers.” The Team concluded that there appeared “to be a healthy interactive relationship between the providers and the consumers of data within the University.” (p. 40) At the same time, areas of further improvement were identified. The Team quoted Chico’s own Capacity and Preparatory Review Report to highlight these areas of further improvement: “Chico has been a victim of its own data decentralization, . . . , making integration of its data and evidentiary information more difficult.” The Report had also identified “poor organization and accessibility of available data and evidence” and “the need for better knowledge accumulation, retention and dissemination” as more particular areas for further improvement. In this section, we address the first two issues, while the next section addresses dissemination efforts.

Guided by the principles outlined in its Information Technology Strategic Plan, Chico set out to integrate its many databases by building a campus-wide Chico data repository. The Chico Enterprise Data Warehouse brings together heterogeneous databases (Figure 4.2) under a common conceptual and technical umbrella (Figure 4.3) and makes them available for operational and decision support applications. The data warehouse organizes selected data of interest to a user group into data marts so that access becomes faster, cheaper and more effective. (Figure 4.4) (CFR 4.5)
The Enterprise Warehouse architecture is sized to provide space not only for Finance, Human Resources and Student Administration data but for all other data produced on and off campus for planning and decision making.

Towards Web-Based Communication and Reporting Services

The function of the new warehouse structure ultimately is to deliver data in an appropriate format to the appropriate user within a time frame such that the data are deemed relevant and value-adding for planning and decision making purposes. The campus has adopted the ‘Flying Pyramid Model’ to illustrate how different user populations are being served by different sets of data and tools.

![Flying Pyramid Model](image.png)

**Figure 4.5**

The Transaction

**Layer:** The foundation of our pyramid represents the growing collection of campus data managed by a group of functional software specialists and supported by campus staff. The daily business of the university is conducted at this level as applications are accepted and processed, students apply for loans, class schedules are constructed and rooms assigned, students add and swap courses, faculty deliver course content in person and over the internet, supplies are purchased, people are hired, grants are administered, and funds raised.

The Operational Reporting Layer: The next level is the first of three layers supported by our campus warehouse data. This largest of the warehouse layers represents operational reporting. It consists of reports, audits, and listings that monitor daily operations at a very fine grain level. It demonstrates progress of operational processes, identifies problems and shows us what data need to be cleaned. Operational Reports give staff, managers, and department chairs the information they need to run their daily operations. The data are typically at the individual case level, such as student, class, and financial account, rather than summarized in some fashion.

The Operational Dashboard Layer: The next level is a smaller layer that is supported by a summarized set of the same data used by the Operational layer. The users of these data are typically Managers and Department Chairs. The method of delivery of these data is dashboards and summarized listings.

The Strategic Scorecard Layer: At the tip of the triangle is the smallest but most important layer of our pyramid because it contains the ‘seeing eye’. It is the layer that measures progress towards our strategic priorities. The data that support this layer is highly summarized and Deans and Administrators use scorecard tools to monitor achievement of institutional goals.

To foster campus-wide use of data and analytics to make better decisions and extract maximum values from their processes, KMIT undertook the development of a central reporting Web site, identified a standardized reporting toolset and created a scorecard process. Whereas initially the campus had chosen PBViews for its electronic, Web-based reporting system, subsequent experience with this product and the emergence of alternative products caused CSU, Chico to reconsider its decision and select the Microsoft BI toolset to build out its campus reporting. Campus leaders and managers are now able to access data and analytics through reports available at our one-stop DATA Web site. These reports support analysis for program review and redesign, budgetary and staffing decisions as well as mandatory reporting. The DATA Web site also provides an easy process for requesting data reports, reviewing data definitions, and linking to other resources. Through the use of these tools we are now able to help departments, divisions and the university view progress towards strategic priorities and goals, especially through annual reports/scorecards. (CFR 4.5-4.6)
Summary

CSU, Chico has responded vigorously to Capacity and Preparatory Review Visitation Team recommendations concerning the further development of the Enterprise Knowledge Management Initiative (p. 45), the establishment of performance indicators for its strategic plan (p. 44) and the further pursuit of institutional alignment (p. 39). It has adopted the 'cascading model' for organizational alignment, its divisions have developed/updated their respective strategic plans and measurement plans, and it has made significant progress in integrating its data warehouse as a basis for its knowledge management architecture. Chico has grown more confident in exploring the use of measurement as a language to help translate strategy into action. Performance indicators/dashboards are proving to be a convenient way for leaders and managers throughout the University to analyze information about their units and the activities they manage. They are also proving useful to communicate vision, mission and strategies to all members of the University community.
Today Decides Tomorrow

“On the afternoon of April 8, 1887 a telegram arrived in Chico announcing the selection of Chico as the site of the new state normal school. Then Governor Bartlett had overcome the lobbying effort of Red Bluff, Redding, and Colusa to produce a unanimous vote for Chico among members of the site selection committee. The Oroville Mercury commented, ‘Chico’s condition is Normal … It will probably be abnormal on Friday.’

Since its beginnings in 1889, California State University, Chico has provided generations of students with unique educational experiences built upon an inclusive learning community of faculty, staff, and students who live, work, and study within a rural Northern California setting. Today, CSU, Chico is a comprehensive university serving not only the local region, but also the state, the nation, and the world, through instruction, research, and public service. It continues to emphasize the special sense of place and purpose that defined and continues to define Chico State. This awareness—enriched by the harmony of its physical and natural environment; guided by orientations to civic engagement, sustainability, and regional stewardship; and focused on student learning and student success—truly sets it apart and impresses first time visitors as surely as it energizes those who are on campus every day.

Reflective Essays

As outlined in its Institutional Proposal, the vision, mission, and strategic priorities of CSU, Chico served as the framework for the selection of the areas of emphasis to be examined in the course of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER). Under the strategic planning-based model for the EER report, the campus selected for institutional engagement a series of topics subsumed under three major themes: a) the nature of student engagement at a residential campus, b) the refinement of the academic program review process, and c) the innovative use of academic technology. Following recommendations of the Capacity and Preparatory Review Visitation Team, a fourth theme was subsequently incorporated, namely d) towards increased institutional effectiveness and accountability.

The Theme I essay addressed the topics of the “Chico Experience,” diversity, alcohol education, and the “First-Year Experience,” by first providing the conceptual frameworks that guided efforts to influence student learning and student success in these areas and by next providing the evidence used to report progress in the evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs. In each case, significant progress since the last reaccreditation was demonstrated.

The Theme II essay described in detail the progress made in the assessment of student learning outcomes within the context of program review. The reorganizing of the infrastructure for student learning assessment coupled with the refinement of the academic program review demonstrate that CSU, Chico is now more actively engaged in systematic evaluation of student learning and is gathering, analyzing and interpreting meaningful data about how to improve student learning and student success.

CSU, Chico has a rich history of leadership in academic and information technology. As demonstrated in the Theme III essay, Chico continues to strive for excellence in the delivery of infrastructures and services that enhance educational effectiveness. A review of our experiences with Learning Productivity Projects resulted in a campus effort to develop the Exemplary Online Instruction Program—now driven by our nationally recognized Rubric for Online Instruction. The innovative use of technology is particularly in evidence in the redesign of the science component of the general education program following recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences. The progress reported to date is encouraging. In the fall of 2008 the drivers for curriculum transformation changed in response to budget reductions and are now inspiring other colleges to entertain similar curriculum transformations.

Interestingly, the Theme IV essay provides the integrative component required for all Educational Effectiveness Reports irrespective of the particular review model selected. As described in that essay, CSU, Chico adopted the “cascading model of strategic alignment” as the model for leading and managing its alignment processes, including the linking of indicators of...
performance, to inform decision making, planning and improvement at all levels. Further aiding these planning, decision making, and alignment processes is the Chico Enterprise Data Warehouse that brings together heterogeneous databases under a common conceptual and technical umbrella and makes them available for operational and decision support applications. Campus leaders and managers are now able to access data and analytics through reports available at a one-stop DATA Web site. Indeed, recent data on report generation via this Web site demonstrate a significant increase in report generation levels throughout the University.

Figure 5.1

Insight Reporting Service
2008 Web Report Generation

CSU, Chico appears to be growing more confident in exploring the use of measurement as a language to help translate strategy into action. Performance indicators / dashboards are proving to be a convenient way for leaders and managers throughout the university to analyze information about their units and the activities they manage. They are also proving useful in communicating vision, mission and strategies to all members of the university community.

Challenges and Recommendations

“Today Decides Tomorrow” reads the inscription above the doors of Kendall Hall. It is the motto of a university that focuses on the future while carrying forward the best of its past. As we now focus on that future, we recognize that Chico will face significant challenges in the near future that may jeopardize the progress reported in this review. Current and anticipated reductions in state support coupled with limited opportunity for enrollment growth will seriously challenge university leaders, at all levels, to stick to the core themes of values-based ‘intentionality’ and ‘alignment.’ Current deliberations suggest that a) this is a resource challenge likely to be for multiple years rather than a single year, b) hard decisions must be made if the university is to remain an institution of “first choice,” and that c) if the university does not take affirmative steps to strategically manage future reductions, it would erode and eviscerate good programs with lesser ones and essential functions with those of lower priority. Fortunately, the reengineered and / or revitalized processes described in this report provide the opportunity for more evidence-based planning and decision making in response to the external challenges. The renewed emphasis on institutional effectiveness and accountability should guide the University as it navigates the rough seas ahead.

The overarching recommendation, therefore, is that the campus takes deliberate and proactive steps to ensure that the new approaches and processes that have resulted from the institutional engagement with the topics selected for emphasis in this Educational Effectiveness Review become anchored in the evolving campus culture of evidence and accountability. In particular, it is recommended that the University:

1. Continue its articulation of the “Chico Experience” not merely as the foundation for forming a brand identity but as a means of further addressing strategic priority 1.2: “Rededicate ourselves to student success by re-examining the total experience of our students.” Preliminary results of the Chico Experience project suggest opportunities for deepening the sense of a distinctive “Chico Experience” for all students and thereby enhance their learning and their success.

2. Further refine its Diversity Scorecard and use it to inform the development of a strategic plan for campus diversity and a Presidential State of the Diversity Report so as to accomplish strategic priorities 1.1—Recruit, enroll, support, and graduate a diverse and high-quality student population— and strategic priority 2.1—Recruit, and retain a diverse and highly qualified faculty and staff.
3. Maintain its excellent efforts to change the culture of drinking and substance use and keep its students and the community safe and thereby pursue strategic priority 1.5—Maintain support systems that support student success.

4. Sustain the campus-wide commitment to purposefully structuring and nurturing first-year students’ engagement and development. Ensure an intentional management of all initiatives and their connections to educational excellence, assessment processes and accountability mechanisms and thereby accomplish strategic priority 1.2.1—Purposefully structuring and nurturing first-year students’ academic, intellectual, cultural, social and civic engagements and personal development.

5. Further institutionalize the assessment of student learning within the context of all program reviews—academic and nonacademic—and thereby demonstrate progress regarding strategic priorities 1.3—Achieve clarity about learning outcomes, coordinate teaching and assessment, and align structures and resources to serve student learning and other institutional intentions—and 1.4—Use the program review process to reflect critically upon and ensure the quality and distinctiveness of all our programs.

6. Bring to fruition its Re-Visioning General Education initiative and thereby satisfy strategic priority 1.2.2—Continuing to develop a distinctive and integrative General Education program.

7. Further invest in the innovative use of technology to bring about student learning, student engagement, and cost savings as a means of addressing strategic priority 3—we will continue to provide the technology, the related training, and support needed to create high quality learning environments both inside and outside of the classroom.

8. Institutionalize the progress made in strategic alignment and performance measurement at both university and divisional levels within the context of strategic priority 5.6—Strengthen our institutional effectiveness . . .—in general and strategic priority 5.6.3—Fostering a culture of evidence and accountability through the development of formal assessment and performance measurement systems—in particular.

9. Integrate the “Financials” warehouse and student assessment databases into the Chico Enterprise Data Warehouse and further develop the Insight service by developing advanced dashboards and forecasting model to advance strategic priority 3.6—Assure that all learning and business processes and administrative services are supported by an effective and reliable information technology infrastructure.

10. Ensure that ongoing assessment and improvement as well as evidence-based planning, resources allocation, and decision making are accepted practices.

Conclusion

This Educational Effectiveness Review Report provides evidence for what CSU, Chico is achieving in learning, i.e. educational objectives and design, processes of review, and educational results. Each of the essays tells the story of how Chico State faculty, staff and students along with community partners have made exceptional efforts to strengthen and advance student learning. Their successes come within the context of integrated campus planning and priorities that shape the institution’s direction and reinforce its values.

While Chico identified a number of challenges to be addressed in the near and longer-term future, its core commitments to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness—clear purpose, clear and appropriate educational objectives, organizational structures and processes that fulfill its mission and achieve its vision, fiscal stability, high levels of integrity and committed faculty, staff and leadership—have been evident throughout the stages of the reaccreditation process. Overall, this Educational Effectiveness Review Report reflects the confidence that, even under challenging circumstances, this institution can—and will—choose its own future and fulfill its educational mission.
APPENDICES

Appendix I: Required Data Exhibits 7.1 and 8.1
Appendix II: Institutional Stipulation Statement
Appendix III: Campus Response to Preparatory and Capacity Review Recommendations
Appendix IV: Educational Effectiveness Review Evidence Links
Appendix V: The CSU, Chico College Portrait
Appendix VI: University Organization Chart