

**The California State University, Chico
Council for Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability
A Proposal**

April 20, 2001

Approved by Cabinet, April 27, 2001

Background

Colleges and universities are increasingly asked to demonstrate their value and their effectiveness. This pressure comes from a variety of sources, including national and state governments, boards of trustees, accreditation agencies, as well as students and their families. Although calls for accountability are not new to higher education, there seems to be an increasing number of vested parties making increasingly sophisticated and intrusive attempts to monitor and influence the way colleges and universities operate (Borden and Banta, 1994).

The proposal for the formation of a CSU, Chico Council for Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability is in response to this general pressure for effectiveness and accountability as well as in response to a number of specific external and internal factors and sources, including but not limited to the following:

McNall Memo of December 10, 2000

“There are assessment efforts going on all over campus, some of which seem disconnected with our efforts. Our office has been given the authority and responsibility for all accountability efforts. What is the best way to bring into the tent the work being done in Business and Finance and Student Affairs?” (p.4)

“Accountability builds on the information gathered through assessment; accountability is not assessment.” (p.5)

CSU, Chico Strategic Plan

Strategic Priority # 5. “Believing that we are accountable to the people of the State of California, we will continue to diversify our sources of revenue and strategically manage the resources entrusted to us.”

CSU, Chico “acknowledges, ensures, and documents that it is fully accountable to the people of the State of California” (*The Cornerstones Report*, Principle 9) by identifying performance goals and indicators to help build high quality curricula, facilities, personnel, university relations and a sound financial plan.

CSU Accountability Process

Principle 2. “Accountability not only informs the public about the performance of the CSU and its campuses, but it is also an opportunity to show commitment to continued progress. Accordingly, the system and each campus will report in ways that capture how performance evolves over time. The focus will be on the performance of individual campuses in the context of their different missions, goals, students, and environment.”

Principle 4. “The CSU constantly evaluates performance areas and accountability indicators to ensure that they effectively reflect institutional performance.”

Performance Area 13: Institutional Effectiveness.

“The primary mission of the CSU is teaching and learning. Administrative functions and the campus environment should support this mission through responsiveness to the needs of students and faculty, and through increasing efficiencies while maintaining the educational quality, excellence and effectiveness of each campus.”

Possible Indicators: “For each university, periodic (four-year) reports describing the achievements of the campus for improving its institutional effectiveness, including quantitative and qualitative data related to such areas as (the following are examples and not requirements):

- effective strategic planning;
- a collegial environment;
- faculty and student participation in shared governance;
- regular surveying of student needs and the effectiveness of student support services;
- regular surveying of faculty and staff needs and the effectiveness of faculty and staff development opportunities and programs;
- data from students on satisfaction with access to learning opportunities, the quality of academic advising, and access to faculty beyond the classroom;
- data from students (e.g., SNAPS) or alumni/ae on the satisfaction and perceived value of CSU education in the academic program review process;
- graduate and professional school acceptance rates;
- employer feedback on the preparation of graduates’ skills, knowledge, and ability to continue learning;
- organizational units using benchmarking, satisfaction surveys, or other evaluative measures to assess performance; and
- regional and programmatic accreditation.”

The Cornerstones Report

D. Ensuring University Accountability.

Principle 9. “The California State University will account for its performance in facilitating the development of its students, in serving the communities in which we reside, and in the continued contribution to the California economy and society, through regular assessment of student achievement and through periodic reports to the public regarding our broader performance.”

The recommendations in support of this principle provide:

9a. The CSU will expand and/or develop mechanisms for assessing institutional performance in the areas of student achievement, student satisfaction, the quality of teaching and support services, administrative effectiveness, the provision of services to the community and to the state's economy and society, alumni satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and faculty and staff satisfaction.

9b. The CSU will develop a variety of annual reports, appropriately formatted to reach different audiences, which will serve to inform the public regarding our performance.

9c. The CSU will strengthen employee performance assessment through the careful development of both comprehensive system policies and campus-specific procedures implementing those policies.

10d. The CSU will work cooperatively with external agencies (WASC, CPEC, etc.), to develop appropriate accountability frameworks.

Cornerstones Task Force # 3: Institutional Integrity, Performance and Accountability

“This report takes the disparate CSU activities designed to ensure accountability and transform them into a comprehensive array of recommendations designed to improve performance of the institution and to affirm to the public the CSU's commitment to excellence and accountability.”

“The goals are to discover information to help guide continual internal improvement and to demonstrate to external constituents the results of the state's investment. ... We focus on the linkage between internal program assessment and external communication of that performance.”

“An essential element of the Cornerstones effort is the integration of an effective system of accountability into the fabric of institutional planning and resource allocation.”

“For purposes of demonstrating accountability as a teaching and learning institution, we believe it useful to focus on two dimensions of accountability, which we have chosen to call performance accountability and regulatory accountability. Performance accountability as we have defined it is the alignment of system goals and purposes with overarching system performance. It is goal-oriented and assessment-centered. To achieve performance accountability requires clarity about goals and expectations, and sharp assessment of performance using a variety of measures. Performance-centered accountability speaks of institutional achievement, not control of the means by which goals are obtained.”

Distinguish between assessment and accountability. “Assessment systems by their nature serve internal audiences, not external ones, and increased effective accountability to external audiences is one of our needs and priorities. In our view, assessment and

accountability are complementary, and can be mutually reinforcing, but one is not a substitute for the other.”

Dimensions of accountability. The essential elements of a comprehensive accountability system include the following:

- Clear expectations for student achievement
- Appropriate balance between systemwide net accountability and campus differentiation
- Report card indicators of performance, both for internal and external audiences and purposes
- Student outcomes assessment
- Employee (faculty, administrative and staff) performance evaluation
- Accreditation and program review
- Appropriate and narrow use of State and federal regulations, including a re-evaluation of the linkage between accountability and resources through the budget process
- Improved public and stakeholder information.

WASC Handbook of Accreditation (January 2001).

In 1998 the Commission adopted two Core Commitments and six principles to govern the redesign of the WASC accreditation process. The Core Commitments are to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness. (p.3)

Overview of the Accreditation Cycle (p.34)

Focus:	Institutional & Educational Effectiveness
Organization:	Two Core Commitments supported by Four Accreditation Standards
Structure & Cycle	Adaptive and Responsive to Institutional Context and Priorities

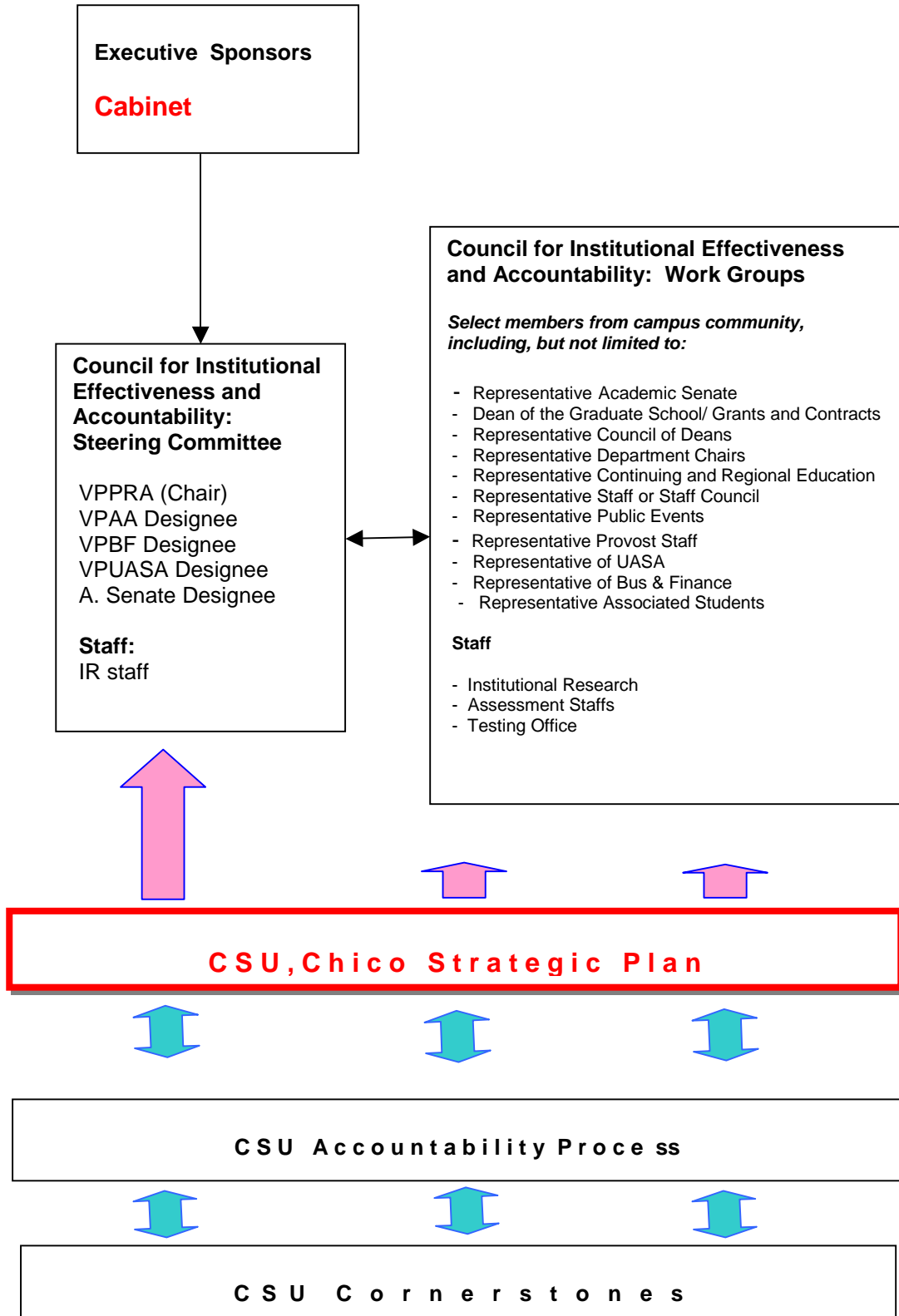
Charge to the Council

In its *Strategic Plan for the Future*, the California State University, Chico committed itself to “strategically manage the resources entrusted to us by the State and the people of California.” This strategic management thrust was to be supported by “the installation of formal assessment and performance measurement systems.” In addition, the campus committed itself to “being fully accountable to the people of the State of California” by creating an accountability environment that is linked to its own vision, mission and strategic priorities as well as to the CSU *Cornerstones* fundamental policy goals.

Given these commitments to institutional effectiveness and accountability, the Council for Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability is charged with the responsibility to:

1. Coordinate the design and implementation of institutional effectiveness measurement and accountability management systems that support the CSU, Chico Strategic Plan for the Future.
2. Where appropriate, assemble technical workgroups to identify variables, create data definition and calculation conventions and develop reporting strategies for each of the content areas contained in the CSU, Chico Strategic Plan for the Future and the CSU Accountability Process.
3. Assist in the formulation of the CSU, Chico’s response to the CSU Accountability Process.
4. Champion the integration of all effectiveness measurement systems and management systems in alignment with University vision and mission.
5. Assist in the development of an appropriate information and technology infrastructure for the institutional effectiveness and accountability measurement process.
6. Monitor the reliability and validity of systems and methods of effectiveness and accountability measurement.
7. Promote campuswide understanding, support, and acceptance of the institutional effectiveness and accountability approach.
8. Communicate and report institutional effectiveness and accountability measurement results to facilitate performance improvement.
9. Identify and advocate strategies and tactics that will help ensure CSU, Chico’s accountability in a changing environment.

Organization of the Council



Action Plan Spring 2001

For the remainder of the Spring 2001 semester we will start to:

1. Begin to make an inventory of major current information systems, assessment/ measurement efforts, and effectiveness and accountability reports currently being issued by campus units.
2. Begin the process of promoting understanding, support, and acceptance of the institutional effectiveness and accountability approach.

Beyond Spring 2001

Following the 2001 Spring semester, we propose to:

1. Characterize the CSU, Chico “effectiveness and accountability” environment.
 - a. Identify current regulatory standards to which we are held accountable.
 - b. Identify the stated performance standards to which we are held accountable.
 - c. Identify the implicit performance standards to which we are held accountable.¹
2. Identify current gaps in and strategies, approaches, methods and tactics for meeting the effectiveness and accountability standards identified.
3. Gather information on the experience of effectiveness and accountability measurement/management systems of comparable institutions.
4. Identify strategies and tactics that will help ensure CSU, Chico’s accountability in a changing environment.

¹ The distinction between regulatory and performance accountability was introduced in the Cornerstones Taskforce #3 Report entitled *Institutional Integrity, Performance and Accountability*.

References

- Borden, Victor M. H. and Trudy W. Banta (ed.), *Using Performance Indicators to Guide Strategic Decision Making*, New Directions for Institutional Research, no. 82, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.
- Gaither, Gerald H., *Assessing Performance in an Age of Accountability: Case Studies*, New Directions for Higher Education, no. 91, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.
- Kearns, Kevin P., *Managing for Accountability*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.
- Massey, William F. and Joel W. Meyerson (ed.), *Measuring Institutional Performance in Higher Education*, Princeton, NJ: Peterson's Guides, 1994.
- Middaugh, Michael F., *Understanding Faculty Productivity: Standards and Benchmarks for Colleges and Universities*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001.
- Office of the Provost, *The Strategic Plan for the Future*, California State University, Chico, 1995, www.csuchico.edu/prs/
- The California State University, *The Cornerstones Report: Choosing Our Future*, Long Beach, CA., 1998; www.calstate.edu/cornerstones.
- Wellman, Jane V., "Assessing State Accountability Systems," *Change*, March/April, 2001, pp. 47-52.