

PREPARATORY REVIEW REPORT

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

PREPARED FOR THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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PREPARATORY REVIEW OF CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

The Preparatory Review examines the extent to which the institution meets Core Commitment One: “The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures and processes to fulfill its purposes.” This review is sometimes referred to as the “capacity review,” since it examines the resources that would make it possible for the institution to provide a stable, responsible, and educationally effective education for all its students. The Educational Effectiveness Review, which follows the Preparatory Review by one year, will be responsive to Core Commitment Two. In the present document, all four standards supporting these two commitments are selectively referenced via pertinent Criteria for Review (CFR); Standards 1 and 3, however, relate most directly to institutional capacity. Many of the Standard 2 and Standard 4 CFR refer to the substance of what the institution is engaged in and will be examining in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Organization of the Review

The Preparatory Review consists of four sections: Introduction, Institutional Context, Thematic Features, and Conclusion.

- The Introduction will present the themes which formed the background of our examination of institutional capacity, relate those themes to the institutional purposes, educational goals, and strategic priorities, and introduce six representative features of university activity for capacity analysis in the Thematic Features section.
- The Institutional Context section will describe the organization, governance, and setting of California State University, Fresno, the characteristics of its service area and its students, and the major goals and recent campus thrusts that have engaged the university since its last WASC review.
- The Thematic Features section, which forms the heart of the review, will analyze the six representative features of university activity (two for each theme), determining what structures, processes, policies, and resources exist or are needed to better support the selected activities. The features selected were chosen to be significant, representative, and revealing of both strengths and weaknesses.
- The Summary and Conclusions will review the university’s capacity strengths and weaknesses as presented in the earlier sections, relate those to the four [WASC Standards](#), and discuss prospects for enhancing that capacity. The institution's plans for the Educational Effectiveness Review will also be addressed.

The printed version of the review is supplemented by appendices, accessible by links in the Web version, which include an Evidentiary Report on each of the three themes; the Exemplars; the Strategic Planning Goals; a listing of the membership of the WASC Self-Study Steering Committee; and the Required Displays.

Grounding Documents

At the basis of the university's structure and function lie two critical documents: the university Mission Statement and the university Vision. The [Vision for California State University, Fresno](#), developed in 1993 and modified in the most recent strategic plan, [Vision for the 21st Century: Plan for Excellence II: 2001-2006](#), reads:

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Our vision is to be one of the nation's premier interactive universities, recognized for quality teaching, transformational scholarship, and cultural leadership for the benefit of society.

The revised university [Mission Statement](#) has effectively guided the university since 1993, having been developed by the Academic Senate and approved by the president in May of that year:

The university offers a high-quality educational opportunity to qualified students at the bachelor's and master's levels, as well as in joint doctoral programs in selected professional areas.

To carry out this mission, the university provides a General Education program and other opportunities, to expand students' intellectual horizons, foster lifelong learning, prepare them for future professional study and instill within them an appreciation of cultures other than their own.

The university offers undergraduate degrees and programs in the liberal arts and sciences as well as in a variety of professional disciplines emphasizing agriculture, business, engineering and technology, health and human services, and education, preparing students for productive careers and responsible world citizenship.

Building upon the strength of these undergraduate programs, graduate programs provide opportunities for personal and career enhancement through advanced study, preparing students for positions of leadership in the arts, sciences, and professions.

The university encourages and protects free inquiry and statement, ensuring a forum for the generation, discussion and critical examination of ideas. By emphasizing the primacy of quality teaching and the close interaction between faculty and students, the university seeks to stimulate scholarly inquiry and discourse, inspire creative technical competencies, encourage and support research and its dissemination, and recruit and develop outstanding teacher-scholars/artists.

The university fosters an environment in which students learn to live in a culturally diverse and changing society. Within that environment, it strives to develop a community founded upon mutual respect and shared efforts, in which individuals can communicate openly and work together to enrich the lives of all and to further the growth and excellence of the university. The university seeks and encourages historically under-represented students to embark upon and complete a university education.

The university serves the San Joaquin Valley while interacting with the state, nation, and world. The university is a center of intellectual, artistic and professional activity. Through applied research, technical assistance, training and other related public service activities, the university anticipates continuing and expanding partnership and linkages with business, education, industry, and government.

Strategic Planning Goals and Priorities

In the university's most recent strategic plan, [Plan for the 21st Century: Plan for Excellence II](#), the university identified [thirty-eight strategic goals](#) and [twelve priorities](#). In this essay, reference will be provided to the Strategic Plan Goals (SPG) as well as the WASC Criteria for Review (CFR), via links to the right of the relevant text, and priorities will be included in the essay text where appropriate.

Institutional Purposes and Educational Goals

In order to facilitate the analysis of capacity and effectiveness, the campus WASC Steering Committee has drawn upon the grounding documents discussed above, as well as numerous other campus policies and documents, to derive a set of Institutional Purposes and accompanying Educational Goals.

Institutional Purposes.

1. Offer quality academic degree and continuing education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels that are fully accredited and/or known for their excellence.
2. Provide educational access to qualified students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented populations, through various modalities on and off campus.
3. Promote and support outstanding scholarly/creative activity and pure/applied research by faculty, particularly the generation and extension of knowledge benefiting the region.
4. Be a leading partner in education/training, research and cultural affairs with industry, government, school districts and community groups for economic development and improved quality of life.
5. Establish an environment reflecting and encouraging integrity and ethical standards in individual behavior and organizational conduct.

Educational Goals.

1. Ensure a positive campus atmosphere that promotes inclusiveness and understanding of others and prepares graduates for life and work in a multicultural society.
2. Foster a learning community on campus that is actively engaged in discovery of knowledge, development of skills, and acquisition of experience.
3. Instill a culture of continual learning and improvement for all educational endeavors and the systems that support them.
4. Recruit, mentor and support faculty as productive scholars and effective teachers.
5. Encourage and support leadership development, civic involvement and on-going service to the community.

Preparation of the Review

The campus WASC Steering Committee [link] is highly representative of the campus, with faculty from all eight colleges and schools; representatives of Academic Enhancement Services, Admissions and Records, the Associated Students, Athletics, the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, Continuing and Global Education, Graduate Studies, Human Resources, Institutional Research, the Provost's Office, the Senate Executive Committee, the Smittcamp Honors Program, the university Advisory Council, and the University Budget Committee; and a college development officer.

Subgroups of the campus WASC Steering Committee explored each of the three thematic areas and developed extensive reviews of the many features of university activity appropriate to their theme. Those reviews are provided outside of this essay as further evidentiary support. It is from those reviews that the six features analyzed in this essay were chosen. As might be expected, because the subgroups each had their own concerns, backgrounds, and emphases, the styles and treatments of the six features reflect the styles of the groups which gave them birth.

The university's Reaccreditation Proposal, approved by WASC in 2001, identifies five institutional goals and associated outcomes expected from the self-study and review processes. These involve outcomes assessment, strategic planning, institutional decision making, and vision/mission awareness; all are addressed by this Preparatory Review, to varying degrees.

The Themes: Opportunity, Exploration, Interaction

Opportunity – “Access to Quality Programs for Diverse Populations.” The theme *opportunity* is meant to communicate the idea that a quality education should be available to all eligible students. This is evidenced by a strong commitment to equity that ensures the lowering of barriers to entry and retention for all groups of learners—be they low-income and migrant students, community college transfers and first-generation college attendees, immigrant and international students, reentry adults and returning professionals, or distance and Web-based learners. The Opportunity theme is therefore dual-faceted, stressing both a strong commitment to equity and diversity and a purposeful dedication to the provision of a quality education for all concerned. It is important to note that the opportunity discussed here is thus not limited to students; it also refers to the chance afforded to faculty, staff, and administrators for involvement in this critical endeavor, as teachers, advisers, supporters, and enablers of students. These faculty, staff, and administrators—as diverse learners themselves—require access to excellent training and development programs for professional advancement and for the improvement of the university. And overall, the assurance of quality creates as well the need for structures and processes of vigilant, ongoing oversight and accountability.

This theme is closely aligned with the university's Vision and, particularly, the first, third, and sixth paragraph of the Mission Statement, above; the first two Institutional Purposes; and the first and fourth Educational Goals. Two representative features of university activity, dealing directly with access and quality, will be examined in detail in the Thematic Features section of this essay: Outreach and Academic Support Services, and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment.

Exploration – “Discovery of Knowledge, Self, and Society Through Expanding Horizons.” The theme *exploration* is intended to convey the concept of acquiring a deeper understanding of the individual and society by pushing out the boundaries of awareness. For students, this means becoming conscious of new ideas and possibilities. For faculty, it involves extending the frontiers of knowledge and creating new expressions of culture as scholars and artists. For staff and administrators, exploration includes mastering and improving organizational support systems that contribute to educational effectiveness of the university. In each instance, both effort and results are stimulating and meaningful.

The alignment of this theme with the university Vision and, particularly, paragraphs two and five of the Mission Statement, is evident. It is most strongly reflected in the fifth Institutional Purpose and the second and third Educational Goals. The two features of university activity targeted in this particular Thematic Features section are Service-Learning and Research.

Interaction – “Transformation through Integration of Knowledge and Experience.” The theme *interaction* connotes empowerment to transform oneself and be changed by the surrounding world. It involves the acquisition and application of knowledge and skill through experience with students, faculty, staff, administrators, colleagues, and constituents of the university. Interaction extends outward from classroom dialog among students and between faculty and students to involvement of the entire university with cultural organizations, industry associations, community groups, government bodies, and educational institutions through its many and varied outreach programs, educational centers and research institutes. The reciprocal impact of experiential learning via student internships, professional collaborations, institutional partnerships, service-learning, and other interactions can be enriching intellectually, spiritually, financially, and otherwise.

The alignment of this theme with the Vision of a “...premier interactive university ...” and the sixth and final paragraphs of the university's Mission Statement could not be more clear. The theme aligns most closely with the third and fourth Institutional Purposes and the fifth

Educational Goal. Representative features selected for examination in the Interaction Thematic Features section are: Campus Communities—Learning Groups; and University Linkages—Centers/Institutes.

Together, these three thematic essays with their selected feature analyses present a significant cross-section of the complex educational arena that forms California State University, Fresno.

SECTION II. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

California State University System

California State University, Fresno, also known as Fresno State, is one of twenty-three campuses of the [California State University \(CSU\) system](#). The CSU is responsible to a Board of Trustees which is, in turn, responsible to the Governor of California. The Board of Trustees determines regulations governing the system, publishing them in the [California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Division 5](#). The chief executive of the CSU is the chancellor, currently Dr. Charles Reed, supported by the Chancellor’s Office and advised by his staff and by the Council of Presidents of the various campuses. The Chancellor’s Office, in consultation with the campuses, sets overall policy, allocates state funding of the system, and negotiates all collective bargaining agreements with the various unions. CFR 3.9

While the campus is part of a larger system and subject to collective bargaining agreements, it retains very substantial autonomy in the critical areas of programs, curriculum, organization, and rules and policies. CFR 1.6

University Administrative Organization

The campus has a relatively conventional [organizational structure](#) with a [president and four vice presidents](#) – provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, vice president for Administrative Affairs and chief financial officer, vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students, and vice president for University Advancement. In addition to the four vice presidents, the director of Athletics, the internal auditor, and the university budget officer report directly to the president. The last also reports to the vice president for Administrative Affairs. CFR 1.3, 3.8, 3.10

The president of the university is Dr. John D. Welty. Dr. Welty came to the university as president in July 1991. In addition to his many responsibilities on campus, he has championed the cause of community interaction, the basis of one of our three accreditation “Themes,” and has played a leadership role in the CSU system strategic plan – Cornerstones – and several other system initiatives.

The interim provost and vice president for academic affairs is Dr. Jeronima Echeverria. She replaces Dr. J. Michael Ortiz, who came to the campus in 1996 as associate provost. Dr. Ortiz has recently been appointed president of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, the third recent provost from this campus to have been appointed to a CSU presidency. [The provost’s office](#) is responsible for the academic colleges and schools, personnel, and resources; grants and research administration; academic technology; and institutional research.

The most recent vice president for Administrative Affairs and chief financial officer, Dr. Benjamin F. Quillian, served in that position from 1993 to January 2003, when he assumed the position of senior vice president, business and operations, of the American Council on Education. His replacement has not yet been appointed. [The vice president’s office](#) is responsible

for financial operations, human resources, information technology, facilities management, public safety, and auxiliary organizations.

Dr. Paul M. Oliaro assumed the position of vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students at the start of the fall semester, 2002. Dr. Oliaro's immediate predecessor left the university to assume the position of vice chancellor for Student Affairs at UC Davis. [Student Affairs](#) includes enrollment services, academic enhancement services, health and psychological services, and student life.

Dr. Peter N. Smits has served as vice president for University Advancement since 1994. The [Office of University Advancement](#) is responsible for university development, university relations, and alumni relations.

While three vice presidents have left the campus in the past two years, the stature of their new positions affirms the quality of their performance, experience, and support on this campus.

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Financial Management

In 2001-02, the university received a total of \$167 million in general funds, consisting of over \$130 million in base allocation and over \$36 million in revenues and reimbursements, primarily student fees and tuition. In addition, grants, contracts, and private donations to the university have been running near \$60 million per year providing 25 to 30 percent of the total university budget. All basic university functions are funded from the general funds.

The internal allocation process begins with an "off the top" allocation to centrally monitored funds covering personnel benefits, student financial aid, and a variety of other expenses. That is followed by the Level A allocation of funds to the operations of the president's office and those of the four vice presidents. This allocation is made by the president in consultation with his vice presidents and the University Budget Committee. The vice presidents are responsible for allocations to their operations – the Level B allocations.

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In Academic Affairs, funds allocated to instruction are distributed to each college/school utilizing a formula based upon enrollment and an index reflecting the modes of instruction and support operations in that college/school. The University Budget Committee periodically reviews both the indices used and the formula and advises the provost on any revisions. (Almost 10 years ago, following on the budget crisis of the early 1990s, the Academic Senate recommended and the president approved a policy of making separate allocations to the library for operations and acquisitions. Indeed, through most of that period, the acquisitions allocation was increased by 10 percent each year.) Within the colleges and schools, budget committees have been established to advise the deans on allocations at that level.

Full details of the budgeting and expenditures of the university since 1996-97 are available in the [Budget Books](#) for those years, accessed from the Budget Office Web site. (The public nature of this information is an important measure of the openness of the campus and the level of consultation involved.)

EXEMPLAR: University Budget Development

Origin and Academic Structure

California State University, Fresno traces its history back to 1911 with the opening of Fresno State Normal School, located at the current site of Fresno City College. The move to the current site took place in the mid 1950s, and the current name, California State University, Fresno, dates from 1972.

The academic programs have expanded considerably since 1911, and the campus now offers degrees at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral level in a wide range of pure and applied disciplines. The departments offering these degrees are currently housed in eight schools and colleges:

- [College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology](#)
- [College of Arts and Humanities](#)
- [Craig School of Business](#)
- [Kremen School of Education and Human Development](#)
- [College of Engineering and Computer Science](#)
- [College of Health and Human Services](#)
- [College of Science and Mathematics](#)
- [College of Social Sciences.](#)

In addition to these instructional units, there are divisions of [Graduate Studies](#), [Library Services](#), and [Continuing and Global Education](#).

Academic Shared Governance: Importance of Consultation

A strong tradition of academic shared governance prevails in the CSU. This practice has been embedded over the years in the [Constitution of the Academic Assembly](#) (i.e., the faculty), of which the Academic Senate is the representative body. Provisions defining rights and responsibilities have been drawn from multiple sources, foremost of which are the State Legislature, the CSU Board of Trustees, and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

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Consultation and joint decision-making between administration and faculty is recognized by the [California Higher Education Employer-Employees Relations Act](#) (HEERA). Regarding curricular and academic personnel matters, “faculty recommendations are normally approved, except in rare instances and for compelling reasons. The collegial process also recognizes the value of participation by the faculty in budgetary matters, particularly those directly affecting the areas for which the faculty has primary responsibility” (CSU Board of Trustees). Adding to this, the Constitution declares: “The deliberative process of consultation is therefore required. Meaningful consultation, from initial formulation through final determination of policies and procedures, consists of thoughtful deliberation and presentation of facts and opinions leading to consensus or agreement.”

The institutional capacity to be educationally effective is strengthened by the consultative process because faculty are empowered with voice and responsibility for matters within their domain – namely curriculum design, student learning, and teaching pedagogy.

Structure of Senate. While the full [Academic Senate](#) is the formal recommending body to the president of the university, the shaping of policy and procedures and the review of proposed programs (and evaluations thereof) occur within the elected standing committees and appointed subcommittees. Administrators (and in some instances students) serve ex-officio. Two and three levels of review by a subcommittee, its parent standing committee, and the [Executive Committee](#) (on which the provost and president sit) screen and refine documents before these are presented to the Academic Senate for action. The president makes the final decision.

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The institutional capacity to be educationally effective has been structurally enhanced since the last accreditation review in 1993. The Program Review Subcommittee of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee was established in 1996 to provide greater attention to undergraduate program review, a function which had been a portion of the charge of the Undergraduate Curriculum Subcommittee. With the advent of student outcome assessment on the campus, the Program Review Subcommittee revised its governing document to provide integration of

assessment into the review. In 1998, the General Education Subcommittee was converted to a standing committee. Coupled with the existing Undergraduate Curriculum Subcommittee, the Graduate Committee, and the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee these changes strengthen institutional capacity to review student learning and program change.

Process of Policy Making. Policy initiatives originate from the faculty or the administration in response to needs. Typically, the latter presents proposals and renders data/information support to deliberations. Decisions to recommend policy to the next level of review are mostly reached by consensus. The consultative process at multiple levels of consideration builds understanding and trust that allows accommodation and compromise in most instances. Critical differences between faculty and administration arise infrequently; when they do, this can result in the president’s rejection of a senate recommendation.

The institutional capacity to be educationally effective has been demonstrated by the recent enactment of the [“Policy on Student Outcomes Assessment Data and Information”](#) [2000], the [“Procedures and Guidelines for Periodic Review of Academic Programs”](#) (inclusive of outcomes assessment) [2002], and a prospective document entitled [“Procedures for Creating New Undergraduate Programs and Changing Existing Undergraduate Curricula”](#) [2003]. These documents have been added to the [Academic Policy Manual](#) (APM). The Academic Senate also adopted an [“Assessment Plan for General Education”](#) [2001]. Included among the policies are the [Statement on Academic Freedom](#) and the related [University Statement on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities](#).

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The University Budget Committee produced a report on rebuilding the faculty in 2000, and the Academic Senate forwarded to the president [“Senate Recommendations on Rebuilding the Faculty.”](#) In 2001 the president commended the committee for its extensive work on this complex and complicated matter and endorsed some recommendations while expressing willingness to engage in dialog about others. This forms the basis for constructive consultation as the university copes with the current budget crisis and plans for eventual recovery.

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Finally, the University Budget Committee works closely with the administration in the development of the [“Level A”](#) allocation – the allocation of funds to the vice-presidents' and president’s offices; in the mid 1990s, the committee formulated a [“Budget Allocation Model”](#) that governs how state funds are distributed to the colleges and schools by the provost’s office. A product of the financial crisis confronting CSU in 1991-94, it serves to dampen sudden shifts in funding as budgets and enrollments fluctuate significantly – thus creating stability in the alignment and deployment of resources to programs in accord with priorities and goals.

Upon the advice of the Administrative Cabinet and Strategic Planning Steering Committee, the president also may make use of a [“Strategic Priorities Fund”](#) to help initiate and achieve university aims. Serving on the committee are faculty leaders, executive-level staffers, and the president and provost.

Campus Facilities

The university is sited on 1470 acres, 74 percent of which is devoted to agriculture – cropland, orchards, vineyards, farm animal facilities, and laboratory and research facilities. The Agricultural Foundation of California State University, Fresno leases an additional 4500 acres of grazing land from the United States Department of Agriculture, at the San Joaquin Experimental Range 22 miles north of the main campus. Athletic facilities, including the Save Mart Center currently under construction, occupy approximately 136 acres, or more than nine percent of the total. The remaining 240 acres, bounded by Cedar, Barstow, Woodrow, and Shaw, includes the [instructional and administrative core](#) of the campus.

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Recent construction in this core includes the Music Building, the Education Building, the

Smittcamp Alumni House, and the Atrium and outside patio adjoining the Student Union and the bookstore. In an area north of the Science Building, the [Downing Planetarium](#) and the State Crime Lab constitute the first elements of the [Fresno State Science Center](#). Pending construction in the Science Center are a planetarium-affiliated science museum and a major new classroom-office building, Science II. Also planned for this area are a number of other buildings, including a Science Partner’s building. With the construction of Science II, the last of six “temporary” buildings dating from 1968 will be removed, putting all academic instruction and offices in permanent facilities designed for such use.

The grounds of the university core have been designated an [arboretum](#), and an arboretum committee, drawing on the expertise of both Buildings and Grounds staff and faculty from the Biology and Plant Science departments, watches over its progress. In addition, the campus features a [Peace Garden](#), an allergy free garden, and a Rose Garden. The Friends of the Arboretum, Tree Fresno, and the San Joaquin Valley Rose Society, local volunteer organizations, also assist in the design and care of the gardens and arboretum.

Classrooms and laboratories have undergone regular renovation and modification. These efforts include, in particular, modifications to better accommodate persons with disabilities and to incorporate new technological resources that bring state-of-the-art capabilities to instruction. These technological innovations are discussed in more detail in the evidentiary report [Opportunity](#).

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Institution and Program Accreditation

California State University, Fresno is fully accredited by the [California State Board of Education](#) and the [Western Association of Schools and Colleges](#). California State University, Fresno was first accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) along with five other CSU campuses whose accreditation was taken over from the Association of American Universities, North Central Association in 1949, and has been accredited ever since. The working relationship with the association has been excellent, as reflected by the fact that President John Welty and University Advisory Committee member Hugo Morales serve on the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities. The most recent full accreditation by WASC was in 1994.

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In addition, 29 schools, colleges, departments, and/or programs are accredited by national or state agencies. [A full list of those accrediting bodies](#) is published annually in the University Catalog.

Strategic Planning – Mission and Vision

[Strategic Planning](#) has become embedded into the organizational culture of the university through the development and execution of three plans in a twelve-year span – each involving extensive campus community participation in its formulation and review before implementation. The plans and their duration are as follows:

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- [Plan for the 90’s \(1993-1996\)](#)
- [Vision for the 21st Century: A Plan for Excellence \(1997-2000\)](#)
- [Vision for the 21st Century: A Plan for Excellence II \(2001-2006\)](#)

The history of strategic planning at California State University, Fresno and a description of the planning process and implementation/monitoring procedures form the text of the exemplar below which also features the interface of the most recent strategic planning exercise with the ongoing WASC Accreditation Self-Study.

EXEMPLAR: Strategic Planning History and Process

EXEMPLAR: Accreditation and Planning Interface

The *Vision for the 21st Century* plans included a systematic process for review of success in reaching the goals – the [Milestones](#) reports. Those reports are available for the first of these two strategic plans. The result of important goals contained in the earlier plans, such as emphasizing diversity, professional development, enhanced educational technology, honors programs, a new General Education Program, service-learning, and funding source diversification are reflected in the institutional changes discussed throughout the present essay.

In anticipation of the upcoming 10-year university accreditation, provision was made in 2000 for the chair of the WASC Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee to be a member of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in order to facilitate communication and coordination of the accreditation and strategic planning processes. Accreditation self-study findings and recommendations regarding institutional capacity and educational effectiveness will be submitted to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for integration with the current plan during its review of *Milestone* reports in fall 2003 and for consideration in the establishment of academic priorities for the Comprehensive Campaign fund raising currently being organized.

Operational Review and Assessment

Operational review of both academic and administrative operations has been a stable feature of the campus for many years. Academic programs have been subject to periodic (typically every five years) review involving an extensive report by the departments of their curricula, currency, research, and community interaction. In addition, departments each submit an annual report to their dean, and each dean submits an annual report to the provost.

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Annual reports have also been prepared by each of the administrative departments to the appropriate vice president, and each vice president prepares an annual report covering the scope of their operations to the president. Recently, administrative program reviews have been instituted with a new set of [Guidelines for Administrative Program Review](#) calling for regular five-year review of programs by their various constituencies.

In response to the CSU Strategic Plan ([Cornerstones](#)), new WASC Standards, and a concern with improving the quality of instruction, considerable emphasis has been given to student learning outcomes assessment. Beginning in 1998, academic departments were encouraged to develop [Student Outcome Assessment Plans](#) (SOAPs), and within three years all departments were participating. The details of that development are covered in the Thematic Features section under Opportunity.

A new [General Education](#) (GE) program was implemented effective with students entering fall 1998. While it was developed prior to the introduction of student outcomes assessment, the stated goals of each of the GE areas translated readily into learning outcomes. An outcomes assessment plan for general education was approved by the Academic Senate in 2001-2002, and assessment activities began in 2002.

Following the introduction of outcomes assessment in the academic areas, beginning in 1999 each administrative department was asked to prepare an outcomes assessment plan. These are reported to the president on a five-year cycle.

The offices of [Institutional Research Planning and Assessment](#) and [Testing Services](#) have assisted departments in their assessment efforts and supported their efforts through administration of surveys such as the [CIRP Freshman Survey](#) the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE), and the [Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory](#). An annual Web-based alumni survey is now in development for initial use fall, 2003. It will seek responses from all

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degree and credential awardees one, five, and nine years after the award and will include items specific to those degrees and credentials, providing material useful data for program and GE assessment.

Fresno County and Its Neighbors — A Profile

While the university has national and international reach, the area primarily served by the campus is Fresno County and the four other San Joaquin counties near Fresno – Kings, Madera, Merced, and Tulare – a truly exceptional region that is home to two-thirds of our students.

The city of Fresno is now the sixth largest city in California; [Fresno County](#) ranks first among counties in the United States in number of farms, farms with sales over \$100,000, amount of harvested cropland, farm production expenses, and market value of agricultural goods produced. The four other counties are also major contributors to California agriculture, with Tulare third and Merced sixth among the nation’s counties in the value of agricultural goods, and the other two counties within the top twenty-five.

The agricultural dominance of the region’s economy, unfortunately, is also associated with labor-intensive, relatively low-paying employment, largely of immigrant and migrant laborers, and is distinguished by its [unemployment rate](#), typically two to three times that of the state; a teen birthrate nearly double that of California and the nation; and the highest poverty levels in the state. It is also plagued with some of the worst air quality in the nation.

The California Department of Finance, in its [Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 1970-2040](#) report, includes historic and projected populations by ethnic group. According to their projections, the county will grow by an average of 1.75 percent per year over that period. The rates of growth are very different for the different ethnic groups, however, with the Hispanic population averaging over 2.5 percent and the non-Hispanic white population averaging 0.5 percent. The white population ceased being the majority group around 1991 and will be exceeded numerically by Hispanics around 2006. In approximately 2035, it is expected that Hispanics will constitute half the county’s population, with whites at about 30 percent and Asians at about 15 percent.

Student Characteristics

Approximately two-thirds of our students – freshmen and transfers – come to us from high schools and community colleges in the five counties, with 33 to 40 percent coming from schools inside Fresno and Clovis. Entering fall 2001 freshmen who indicated ethnicity on their application had an ethnic mix of 42 percent white, 32 percent Hispanic, 19 percent Asian, and 7 percent African-American. That distribution is itself a highly varied combination of regional sources: two-thirds of our Asian freshmen come from the Fresno/Clovis schools, while for the other ethnic categories that figure is closer to one-third. Over 40 percent of African-American freshmen come from outside the San Joaquin Valley, while for the other ethnic categories that fraction varies from 10 to 20 percent.

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Figure 1 displays the ethnic mix of Fresno State freshmen and of native (students who entered as freshmen) baccalaureates, along with “source” distributions. Note the striking decline in share from population to qualified high school graduates, for Hispanics, reflecting the high drop-out rate of that group. Conversely, there is an increasing share for Asians from population through entering freshmen (8 percent to 19 percent). The drop in Asian baccalaureates reflects the rapid growth of this segment of the population – baccalaureates typically having entered the university five to six years earlier.

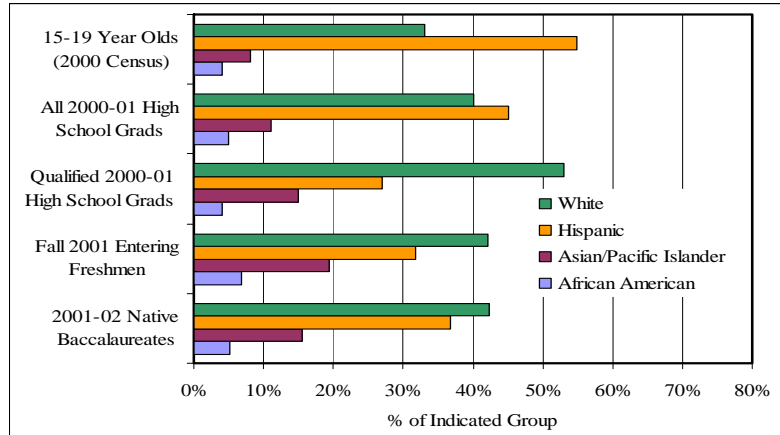


Figure 1. Ethnic distribution of high school age population, graduates, and qualified graduates from the five-county region and for California State University, Fresno entering freshmen and graduates.

In the 2001 HERI Survey, while our entering freshman responses to most of the items were not unlike the national sample of four-year public colleges, their backgrounds were in several ways very different from that national sample.

- 46 percent indicated ethnic background as white/Caucasian, vs. 67 percent for the national sample.
- 31 percent indicated ethnic background as Mexican American/Chicano, vs. 8 percent nationally.
- 32 percent indicated family income < \$25,000, vs. 17 percent nationally.
- 10 percent indicated Permanent resident status, vs. 3 percent nationally
- 27 percent indicated English not their native language, vs. 9 percent nationally
- 29 percent indicated that their father had not completed high school, vs. 11 percent nationally

In spite of these differences, their academic aspirations were quite similar to the national group in the percentage (65) who anticipated a postbaccalaureate degree.

Many local high schools rank rather low on the state Academic Performance Index (API), although there are some conspicuous exceptions. The assigned API scores show ranking of the schools by decile, and yet 38 percent of our entering freshmen come from schools rated in the bottom two categories.

The California State University System requires all entering freshmen to either exempt from, on the basis of coursework or other tests, or take the English Placement Test (EPT) and the Entry Level Mathematics test (ELM). Those not achieving defined minimum test scores must successfully complete a remedial course during their first year in the CSU if they are to be allowed to enter their second year. Among our entering freshmen, 72 percent required some remediation: 28 percent in both math and English; 39 percent in math only; and 5 percent in English only.

A review of regional students is provided by the [Central Valley Report Card](#) of the [Central Valley Higher Education Consortium](#) [link].

Recent Campus Thrusts

Ten areas of new or renewed emphasis since our last WASC reaccreditation stand out in both importance and scope. They have been driven, in part, by strategic planning efforts. These areas are discussed briefly below; a number will be further discussed within thematic feature analyses.

Honors Programs. The university-wide Smittcamp Family Honors Program, now approaching its fifth year of operation, has been very successful, bringing many bright, stimulating students to campus on full scholarships. Not only has the program brought significant educational benefits to the selected students and exciting teaching experiences to the honors faculty, it has benefited all undergraduates by raising the quality of classroom interaction in many non-honors classes and by giving new importance and respect to campus student governance and participation in Academic Senate committees and various task forces. In addition to this university-wide program, the Craig School of Business and the Department of Psychology have developed honors programs in their disciplines, and a number of other colleges and departments are working on similar programs.

Faculty Transformation. The transformation of the faculty is reflected in much greater emphasis, in both hiring and personnel decisions, on faculty research and creative activity. With that has come a reformation of the Retention-Tenure-Promotion (RTP) process, including formal probationary plans and mentoring, along with increased start-up support, more assigned time for research, and greater support for grant proposal preparation. Grant funding quadrupled from 1996-97 to 2002-03, nearing \$50 million.

Community-Campus Interaction. President Welty's goal to make California State University, Fresno "a premier interactive university" has been widely embraced by the faculty. A large number of institutes and centers have been established to facilitate and foster interaction with both the public and private sectors, building on the long-standing success of the [California Agriculture Technology Institute](#) (CATI) and the University Business Center (UBC). Newer efforts include, among many others, the Fresno Area Regional Collaborative Initiative, the [Maddy Institute for Public Affairs](#), the Central California Health Policy Institute, the Children's Institute, the [Interdisciplinary Spatial Information Center](#), the [Central Valley Business Incubator](#), and, for a different audience, the [Downing Planetarium](#). In addition, this interaction is supported through the curriculum with the new [Solutions Center](#), service-learning courses, and [Students for Community Service](#). New partnerships with the community include the [Central Valley Higher Education Consortium](#), the [International Center for Water Technology](#), and the [University High School](#).

Assessment. As noted earlier, the push for [student learning outcomes assessment](#) has fostered assessment programs in every academic department and in the General Education Program. The periodic [program review process](#) has been modified to integrate assessment, utilizing existing structures to monitor and encourage assessment and the intelligent use of assessment results. Following on this effort, administrative departments are now also required to have and to report on outcomes assessment of their operations.

Diversity. While an emphasis on diversity is not new, it has been given added importance in recent years both in recruiting and retention, with the result that both our entering freshman cohorts and our graduating classes well reflect the diversity of our community. As an example, the [Faculty Mentor Program](#), which works with high-risk freshmen, has shown an eight-semester persistence rate—higher than that of all other entering freshmen (64 vs. 57 percent, as revealed in a [study](#) of special program effectiveness).

This diversity emphasis is also reflected in faculty hiring, with minorities comprising 25 percent of full-time faculty and of part-time faculty. This compares to 1997 figures showing a 17 percent full-time and 18 percent part-time minority faculty makeup. Minorities constitute 49 percent of full-time and 39 percent of part-time staff. The recently developed [Employee Data Book](#) contains further information on both faculty and staff.

Academic Technology. Over the past several years, major efforts have been made in planning and implementing significant enhancements in educational technology. The [Technology Strategic](#)

[Plan Task Force](#) completed a major review of the status of university's educational technology, emerging with a set of recommendations that included [smart classrooms](#), [courseware development](#), [faculty computing support](#) and related professional development, complete [student access](#) to computing facilities and on-line administrative services, and [appropriate infrastructure](#).

In fulfillment of this planning process has come [wireless connectivity](#) for the library and the central mall area of the campus, a new office providing [faculty support](#) for [Web-based and Web-supported coursework \(Digital Campus\)](#), the introduction of [Blackboard](#), and leased [laptop computers](#) for full-time faculty. While the transition from a number of legacy programs for financials, human resources, and student administration has not been without snags, the new [PeopleSoft Student Administration](#) system has been very successful in implementing on-line registration, grading, and queries, and works well with recently implemented PeopleSoft Human Resources and Financial Systems.

Doctoral Degrees. In 1991, California State University, Fresno admitted their first students to the [Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership](#), administered jointly with the University of California at Davis. As of May 2003, there have been 80 graduates of the program. Under the [California Master Plan for Higher Education](#), campuses of the California State University are allowed to offer doctoral degrees only jointly with other higher education institutions offering the doctorate. The expansion of the educational doctorate, including offering two tracks (one for K-12, one for college level), and doctoral degrees in criminal justice sciences, speech-language pathology, science and mathematics education, physical therapy, and a JD/MBA are currently in discussion and planning.

Decentralization. College-level autonomy has been substantially increased over recent years, facilitated by formula-based, lump-sum budgeting from the provost's office and the development of college-based fund raising. After the Chancellor's Office moved away from line-item budgeting, the university began to extend to colleges greater and greater freedom in governing how their funds were allocated, making a gradual transition from department- and category-specific funding to a single, lump-sum allocation beginning in 1998.

There is no question that such increased autonomy has fostered greater creativity and entrepreneurial activity by the schools and colleges. The rapid development of institutes and centers and major college-specific donations noted above denotes just some of the results of this change.

New Focus on Athletics. This period saw important changes in the university's athletic programs, including revisions in the sports represented in response to [Cal-NOW and Title IX](#), a new [Student Athlete Code of Conduct](#), a new [Student Athlete Recruitment Code](#), the establishment of an Athletics Advisory Council, and a new [academic emphasis in athletics](#) including the [Academic Gameplan](#) for football. Athletic academic advising is being moved to the Office of the Provost in fall 2003. The strengthening of women's athletics included the addition of women's soccer and women's equestrian teams; the construction of Bulldog Diamond, the finest on-campus softball stadium in the country; and, in 1998, an NCAA championship in softball. The conduct codes, the advisory council, and the greater emphasis on academics arose in part from institutional control issues with basketball and, to a lesser extent, football. The new policies noted above reflect the increased involvement of the Academic Senate and academic affairs. A [Milestone Report](#) documents progress resulting from these changes.

Non-state Support. A major effort over the past decade has been to increase substantially the level of non-state funding of the university through alumni giving and corporate and community support. While the system-wide goal for such giving is 10 percent of overall budget, Fresno State has notably surpassed this mark, achieving a level of giving at or near 30 percent of overall budget, and a growth in addressable alumni from 81,000 to 140,000 over the past five years. For the 2001-02 college year, with contributions totaling over \$23 million, Fresno State was fourth

among the 23 campuses of the system in voluntary donations after San Luis Obispo, San Diego State, and Long Beach State. In Grants and Contracts, Fresno State showed just under \$47 million in 2002-03, a steady and significant increase over a six-year period.

The university has received significant and substantial gifts in recent years, including funding for the [Craig School of Business](#), the [Kremen School of Education and Human Development](#), the [Smittcamp Family Honors College](#), the [Smittcamp Alumni House](#), the [Downing Planetarium](#), and a number of industry gifts in support of the agriculture program, particularly its increasingly renowned viticulture and enology program. In addition to these gifts in support of the academic and community outreach operations of the university, contributions in support of athletic programs have given the university highly competitive teams in many sports as well as state-of-the-arts facilities for football, baseball, softball, and, with the anticipated completion of the \$103 million [Save Mart Center](#), basketball. The Save Mart Center, the largest privately funded facility in the California State University system, will also house a wide variety of university and entertainment events. Student recreational facilities and a center for innovation and entrepreneurship will be added, adjunct to the facility, in 2005.

EXEMPLAR: Support of the University

The university has launched the planning phase of a Comprehensive Campaign that is targeted to raise \$300 million dollars for academic support. This seven-year campaign is projected to culminate in 2011, the year of Fresno State's Centennial. The theme of the campaign, Fresno State: The University for the New California, underscores the academic excellence of our programs and asserts the central role of our university in the intellectual life of the San Joaquin Valley. The guiding principles and major targets for the campaign are being developed by teams of faculty, staff, and administrators who are working to ensure that fundraising efforts support the goals of the university, as outlined in the campus mission and vision statements, as well as the Plan for Excellence. Priorities for funding will include endowed faculty chairs, student scholarships, technology, and new instructional facilities and settings. The Comprehensive Campaign is the first in the university's history, and the first major fundraising drive in support of academic pursuits.

SECTION III. THEMATIC FEATURES

A. OPPORTUNITY: “Access to Quality Programs for Diverse Populations”

Intrinsic to the character of the university is the principle that a quality education should be available to all eligible students as evidenced by an existing strong commitment to equity that ensures the lowering of barriers to entry and retention for all groups of learners.

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Diversity has become a hallmark of our university. The commitment to an inclusive campus is firmly integrated into campus policies and practices, as multiply illustrated in the President's Statement on Campus Climate and Diversity, campus human resource policies, the [Equal Employment and Educational Opportunity \(EEEE\) Plan](#), and the widely diverse array of courses, programs of study, and administrative support programs to facilitate the success of all students. Both the university's [Mission Statement](#) and its [strategic planning goals](#) clearly evidence the university's commitment to embracing ethnic and gender diversity across a wide spectrum, in its population makeup—its students, faculty, and staff—and in its ideological bent. Opportunity as a theme encompasses both equity and quality in education, and depends on the

capacity of the university to achieve, encourage, and maintain each of these elements in a mutually supportive, responsible, and responsive manner. In exploring the Opportunity theme, two major representative features addressing the campus commitment to quality education for diverse students are (1) the expansion of outreach and academic support services, and (2) the implementation of Student Outcomes Assessment Planning (SOAP) as a means to assessing quality in educational programs.

Expansion of Outreach and Academic Support Services

Outreach Services

With the strategic priority of developing an engaged and diverse student learning community, the university has diligently undertaken the challenge of developing the goals, policies, programs and structures necessary to support equal access to higher education for all students. A large number of programs currently operative at Fresno State illustrate this commitment, bringing together the various components that foster the achievement of equity and of quality within that equity. The following paragraphs offer a necessarily brief selection from the available pool. Further examples may be found in the supportive “Opportunity” evidentiary report.

The [University Outreach Services Department](#), under the Division of Student Affairs, is a primary vehicle for furthering the university's opportunity enterprise. In July 1998, in response to the university's need to increase the enrollment and diversity of qualified undergraduate students, the department established the Recruitment and Communication Plan. Basic elements of the plan include analysis of data (enrollment by source code), College Board name buys employing geodemographic analysis, multi-step written communications to prospects, telecounseling prospects, and utilization of a school-based recruitment model. This approach, plus the implementation of such special programs as the two described below and professional recruiting staff visits, has resulted in double digit (17.6 percent) enrollment increases for first-time freshmen and transfer students in the last five years.

A highly significant outreach program implemented by this campus to reach students from low-income and underrepresented groups is the **College Ambassador Program**. The program was established on the premise that students from underrepresented groups would be motivated and encouraged to consider a college education by being exposed to successful college students with similar backgrounds. Thus university students who come from local and rural high schools with low participation rates are hired and trained to return to their schools to inform their fellow students about the advantages of a college education and the road to achieving it, college admissions requirements, preparatory courses, possible majors, and future career opportunities. The ambassadors serve as role models and mentors and provide a variety of services during their visits to the schools, including practical assistance with completion of applications for admission and financial aid. They also provide pre-admission assistance to 9th and 10th graders. This program appears to have significantly helped to raise the aspiration of students and increase the number of students who apply to Fresno State and to other universities. An annual report assesses its activities, with already positive results beginning to show. The true benchmark of its success, however, will be found in the expected long-term improvement in overall college-going rate of students from these previously underserved schools.

A second outreach program, **College Making It Happen**, is specifically directed toward increasing the involvement of parents in their child's education. Involving parents in their child's preparation for college while still in middle school is expected to result in increasing the college-going rate at participating schools. The College Making It Happen program is jointly planned with other segments of higher education in collaboration with K-12 representatives. This inter-institutional approach results in extensive collaboration in the planning of workshops, training of presenters, and development of materials, videos, and college planning guides. The

schools selected are those that have a Title 1 profile and have large populations of targeted low income and underrepresented students. Materials are provided in English and Spanish, and materials for the Southeast Asian population are planned. Participation and feedback from parents and educators have been very positive. A longitudinal study of these students would be helpful in determining the effectiveness of this program.

At the graduate level, the university's diversity figures are impressive. Currently, more than 46 percent of enrolled graduate students at Fresno State are from underrepresented groups, far above the national figure of 22 percent and the regional figure of 27 percent. In 1994, Fresno State won the first Council of Graduate Schools (CGS)/Peterson's Award for Innovation in Promoting an Inclusive Graduate Community. The **Division of Graduate Studies** continues to recruit students from diverse backgrounds that represent the make-up of the university's service area. Among its active strategies is participation in the Central Valley Women's Conference, the Hispanic Business Conference, the State Center Professional Development Conference (for community college employees), and the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education Recruitment Fair, designed to meet the needs of advanced undergraduates and master's candidates from institutions in California who belong to groups that have been or are underrepresented in graduate programs.

Academic Support Services

The university has also realized that access is only a beginning. To ensure the success of a heavily recruited diverse population within the educational setting, consistent with Goal 5 of the *Plan for Excellence II*, policies, programs, and structures are also needed. As a result, Fresno State has developed a wide array of courses and quality programs of study as well as a comprehensive range of services to support the academic, personal, and social development of all students. The mission of the **Office of Advising Services** is to empower undergraduate students by helping them take responsibility for achieving their academic and personal goals, and to support the university advising community. The Office of Advising Services assists students with undeclared major advising, General Education advising, academic petition procedures, special major advising, academic problem solving, and interpretation of university policies and procedures.

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Administrative responsibility for new student orientation was returned to the Office of Advising Services from University Outreach Services in February 2002, and the name of the program was changed from Advising Days to **DOG DAYS: New Student Orientation at Fresno State**. An advisory committee that includes a cross-section of the university community was formed to assist with program planning and development. The program was refreshed to be more responsive to the changing needs of new students. Printed publications were updated to appeal to entering students, and on-line registration for the program was available to students. The academic advising component was strengthened to assist students with academic planning, scheduling, and registration. A diverse group of orientation leaders was trained to assist with all facets of the orientation process. The sessions for parents were redesigned to provide answers to questions about academic planning, financial issues, and co-curricular opportunities. In the program evaluations that were conducted, high marks were accorded to program structure, agenda topics, the resource information fair, major department advising, and assistance with general problem solving. However, evaluations indicated that the credit card session needed to be modified, and this portion has therefore been revised to make it more practical and interactive.

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EXEMPLAR: DOG DAYS

There is an ongoing need to establish a systematic assessment to measure the impact of new student orientation on retention at Fresno State. The research literature clearly suggests that new students who have an orientation experience and receive academic advising are more likely to

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persist through to graduation than are similar students who do not. Only 45 percent of new first-time freshmen and 33 percent of new transfer students participated in the 2002 program. Therefore, the university must make a concerted effort to attract a greater number of entering students to a new student orientation experience

Consistent with the *Plan for Excellence II*, Goal 6, to offer orientation in a variety of delivery formats to assure that students' transition is successful and positive, an on-line orientation experience has been developed and will be available in summer 2003 for students in selected majors who cannot attend the on-campus program. The staff continues to explore the use of technology to offer alternatives to students who are unable to attend the campus program. SPG 6

Advising for transfer students is a major challenge. Preadmission advising is available through **University Outreach Services** that include information on transfer course requirements and assistance with the university application process. Transfer students who participate in new student orientation are connected with major advisers and are guided through class scheduling and the registration process. Bulldog B.A.R.K. for Transfer Students, an advising handbook, is a valuable resource for academic planning. Nevertheless, transfer students must wait several semesters to receive an official evaluation of course credits and the implementation of the PeopleSoft Student Administration system has created additional challenges to providing quality advising services to transfer students. CFR 2.14

In keeping with Goal 7 of the *Plan for Excellence II*, the university has a wide array of special programs designed to support the academic, personal, and social development of target populations. Student services such as the College Assistance Migrant Program, University Migrant Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, and the Reentry Program provide services that are essential to helping student participants realize their academic, personal, and career goals. SPG 7
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One critical program has made a significant impact. California State University, Fresno first began offering a summer orientation experience in 1968 for entering minority students admitted through the **Educational Opportunity Program**. The program was one of the first summer orientation programs in the California State University system and became a system-wide model, renamed **Summer Bridge**, in 1985. This program grew out of a desire to improve the representation and retention of minority students by helping them bridge the academic and environmental gap between high school/community college and the university, to meet the demands of college instruction. Recognizing the essential quality of its services and the strength of the needs it addressed, the Summer Bridge Program was institutionalized in 1994-95 as a permanent feature in the Fresno State curriculum, with a permanent allocation to the budget.

During the early years (1985-94), the effectiveness of the Summer Bridge Program on student performance and retention was closely monitored by the CSU. Initial results seem positive, and periodic retention studies have been conducted; however, a systematic assessment plan to evaluate program effectiveness is not in place. Students are asked to complete an evaluation of the program each year. By working with the Office of Institutional Research to develop a more comprehensive assessment plan, the program should be able to more consistently measure its impact on student retention and graduation.

The program design continues to focus on helping students to build personal, academic, and social skills critical to success at the college level. Program activities and curricula are continuously reviewed to meet the changing needs of students and university requirements. The program offers a unique opportunity to pilot innovative strategies to facilitate student transition, learning, and personal development. In response to Executive Order 665, which requires students to remediate deficiencies in mathematics and English by the end of their first year, the academic curriculum was restructured in the summer of 1999 to place more emphasis on helping students strengthen skills in these areas. The curriculum in mathematics was redesigned to

provide more instruction and tutorial time. Additionally, the writing curriculum was modified to align it with the English department's remedial course and a supplemental instruction component was added. These changes have resulted in remarkable success in helping students complete remediation in mathematics, and significant progress has been made in improving their writing skills.

EXEMPLAR: Summer Bridge

The **Faculty Mentoring Program (FMP) and University 1** constitute two examples of student support service programs provided by this campus to help traditionally underrepresented students toward a successful college experience. Effectiveness was recently maximized after consultation with the two former directors, the associate provost, instructors, faculty mentors, and FMP alumni recommended the merging of these two programs to streamline administrative duties and operating costs. Both now have the same director, staff, marketing materials, and Web site. Recent success of this program in augmenting retention and graduation rates was dramatically demonstrated by findings of the Task Force on Student Success, appointed by the president in January 2003 to review and make recommendations on enhancing student success from entry through graduation. Their study figures showed a second-year drop-out rate 40% below that for non FMP students; a higher first-year GPA, with over half scoring in the upper two quintiles; and an eight-term persistence rate 12% over that for non-FMP students.

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EXEMPLAR: Faculty Mentoring Program

The **Division of Graduate Studies** administers several fellowship programs that foster the mentoring relationships between faculty members and graduate students. One such program is the **California Graduate Equity Fellowship Program**, which seeks to increase the diversity of students completing graduate degree programs on the campus and encourages continuation on to doctoral programs and consideration of university faculty careers. Fellowships are provided for economically disadvantaged graduate students, especially from groups that are underrepresented among graduate degree recipients in their areas of study, and faculty mentoring and research opportunities are actively promoted.

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The **Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program** is a grant-supported national program that has been successfully operative at Fresno State for nine years; it has currently been awarded funding for a multiyear period starting in 2005. The program is a paradigmatic example of an effort to support student success both now and in their academic future. Specifically, the McNair Program is designed to prepare talented college students for graduate study through their participation in an extensive program intended to acquaint them with advanced-level research under the mentorship of a faculty member.

Over its years at Fresno State, the program has evolved proactively to meet the demands of an ever-changing university environment. Refinements and augmentations in the current proposal reflect the perspective of experience regarding needed mechanisms of student support. In this latest proposal, based on multiple evaluations of earlier grant cycles, several key existing components were enhanced and many new developments were instituted. Program length was extended from 12 months to 16 months; GRE preparation was intensified to ensure closer monitoring of scholar performance; and the graduate portfolio was redefined and reviewed differently. Faculty and Advisory Board recommendations, periodic student evaluations, and focus group discussions led to the addition of new program components that included institutes to cover advanced research methodology and the theory and practice of teaching in the academy, and the development of a research proposal that would serve as an early evaluative tool to monitor student performance and as a component in the selection of scholars for participation in the paid summer research internship.

EXEMPLAR: The McNair Program

The **Task Force on Student Success** appointed by President Welty in early 2003 was charged with thinking broadly and looking at the big picture on how the campus systematically affects students. Their work continued throughout the spring term and is in the process of finalizing several recommendations. These include establishing learning communities and a mentor institute; developing four-, five-, and six-year Road Maps to Graduation guides; implementing instructive advising strategies; and requiring mandatory student orientation for new students. These measures have the potential for dramatic impact on student success. CFR 2.13

Implementation of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Planning

Quality Assurance and Assessment

A variety of mechanisms are in place to assess the quality of the student instructional experience and to support faculty in their efforts to strengthen and broaden their skills. Both [graduate and undergraduate program reviews](#), begun in 1978 and 1990 respectively, are conducted periodically on an ongoing basis. In addition, the university is committed to a student learning focus and has established policies, structures, and programs to ensure the implementation of student learning outcomes assessment. CFR 2.3 2.4

The outcomes assessment initiative began March 1998 with a conference on “Assessing Student Learning.” Faculty members gave presentations on assessment, and breakout groups discussed questions regarding outcomes assessment, campus policies, and faculty motivation. SPG 20

Following this, a strategy was devised for implementing assessment. In fall 1998, it was proposed to department chairs that development of an assessment plan could serve as a one-time replacement for five-year program review, and that, in addition, departments would receive one-course assigned time for an assessment coordinator. This proposal was so well received that 20 departments asked to begin the process immediately in spring 1999 rather than waiting until the following fall. Within three years, all departments had participated in the assessment planning process. Unlike many institutions that began with or limited assessment planning to undergraduate programs, this campus included assessment planning for graduate programs from the onset.

Support for assessment planning included regular meetings of assessment coordinators, continued workshops related to assessment, the development of a “[Guide to Outcomes Assessment at California State University, Fresno](#),” allocation of resources, and organizational support from the associate provost, the associate dean of Graduate Studies, the director of Institutional Research, and the director of the Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Academic year 2001-02 saw the development of an assessment plan for General Education. Continuing investment for implementation includes a mini-grant program and ongoing professional development activities, including assessment-related conferences.

The provision of learning opportunities and the recognition of faculty workloads through the provision of assigned time and the replacement of one task (program review) with another (development of assessment plans) were key elements of the assessment initiative. The assessment planning process was modeled on that for program review and achieved many of the same ends. Because participation was voluntary, plan components could be required without prior policy modifications. However, drafting a policy on the use of assessment data was a key early step.

The [Policy on Student Outcomes Assessment Data and Information](#) states that the purpose of assessment is improvement. To encourage programs to ask hard questions, assessment data are the property of the assessing unit and are not to be used for personnel decisions. Assessment plans are reviewed through a formative process modeled on that for evaluation of program

review self-studies. The department selects a team that includes an outside member from the discipline, one member from the school or college, and a third from elsewhere on campus. Through a one-day site visit, team members meet with the department faculty and provide written feedback on the plan. Plans may then be revised prior to review by the appropriate university-level committee (the Undergraduate Curriculum or the Graduate Committee). Even the university-level feedback is advisory. “Finalized” assessment plans are published online to provide an additional level of quality control as well as models for use by other programs.

To encourage ongoing assessment activities and the use of assessment data, department chairs are asked to respond in their annual reports to the questions, “What assessment activities have you carried out in the past year?” and “What changes have you made as a result of what you learned from assessment?” For the past two years, the provost has provided written comments on these responses. Although outcomes assessment has been incorporated into revised guidelines for program review, real institutionalization of the process may require a continuing campaign and investment of resources.

EXEMPLAR: Student Outcomes Assessment Planning

Conclusions and Implications for Educational Effectiveness

In reflection, Fresno State's outreach capacity and the programs it has established to support students prior to and during their admission to college, are many and varied and seem to be effective. A Task Force on Student Success was appointed in spring 2003 to evaluate the larger picture of how the campus systematically affects students from entry through graduation. It would be logical for this task force to also develop an evaluation plan for outreach and support services in order to determine our effectiveness in reaching and supporting our diverse populations and identifying underserved groups. Coordination and increased communication among these multiple programs with similar goals and efforts could possibly conserve resources.

To understand fully how effectively our outreach and support services have been in their efforts to increase the graduation rates of diverse students, the university needs to be able to determine the relationship between the various services and retention. In addition, the focus of outreach and student services on this campus continues to be the undergraduate population, with the graduate students being left to their own devices or with the sole support of their graduate coordinator or faculty adviser. The campus needs to discover ways to facilitate the development of a visible graduate culture that includes increased graduate student recognition and support services. The university also needs to assess the services provided to distance learners and determine whether their educational needs are being equally addressed.

Our campus has been a leader in the CSU in student outcomes assessment planning and implementation. Good strategic plans are living documents and, similar to other campuses, we see the necessity of revising and updating them regularly. The goal of assessment on this campus is the improvement of student learning: results are used to improve academic programs and administrative units in support of a quality education. To ensure continuous assessment and review, student outcomes have been folded into the program review process. While the full effects on student learning are not yet evident, it is clearly important that the university take the necessary steps to determine whether existing plans to facilitate and assess student learning are appropriate and have been implemented as designed.

B. EXPLORATION – “Discovery of Knowledge, Self, and Society through Expanding Horizons”

The theme “exploration” refers both to the expansion of an individual's understanding and to the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through research and creative activities. Clearly, deepening students' understanding is at the heart of the university's mission and will be a major component of the educational effectiveness review. This essay will focus narrowly on the institutional support for service-learning, a pedagogical approach widely acknowledged to provide educational benefits related to the “discovery of knowledge, self, and society through expanding horizons.” Service-learning is an important feature of the institution, cutting across the themes of exploration and interaction.

Expansion of the frontiers of knowledge will be addressed through an analysis of support for research. As described previously, the transformation of the faculty with a stronger emphasis on research and creative activity is one of the major changes seen since the last accreditation self-study. Like service-learning, research cuts across themes and has an enormous impact on the character of the institution.

Service-Learning: Encouraging Exploration, Delivery, and Exchange of Knowledge by Faculty and Staff

According to the [National Service-Learning Clearinghouse](#), “service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.”

Service-learning is one of the primary ways in which the university “provides an environment that encourages exploration, delivery, and exchange of knowledge by faculty and staff.” The pedagogical effectiveness of service-learning is well-documented. In a major study by Astin, published in 1996, service-learning and community service positively impacted all thirty-four outcome measures in the areas of civic responsibility, academic development, and life skills development. And clearly, service-learning is a good match for California State University, Fresno. As early as 1993, the university was committed to engaging students in community service-learning. A goal of the university’s strategic plan, *Vision for the 21st Century: A Plan for Excellence*, was to “work toward integrating a significant service-learning component into the educational experience of each student.” This is consistent with the campus vision of being “one of the nation’s premier interactive universities,” and its strategic priorities to “develop an engaged and diverse student learning community with graduates who value lifelong learning, possess a broad general education, communicate effectively, are mathematically literate, appreciate the fine arts, are committed to the principles of tolerance and freedom, and are concerned about the welfare of others and society,” and to “play a major role in transforming our region by employing the university’s resources for the solution of problems and improvement of the lives and livelihoods of its citizens.”

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EXEMPLAR:—Service Learning: *Child and Family Sciences 133*

In spring 1999, the Academic Senate approved [guidelines](#) by which courses may obtain recognition as a service-learning course. These university policies, along with a commitment by university administrators, faculty members and staff, have helped propel our university into the role of a state and national leader in community service and service-learning.

In 2000-01 and 2001-02, the CSU, with funding from the Governor’s Call to Service initiative, provided Fresno State with \$55,000 to support the development of service-learning courses across the curriculum. This money was used primarily for department mini-grants, faculty grants, and faculty training. Approximately 61 new service-learning course sections were developed out of this funding.

During 2002-03, the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs provided 3 WTU assigned time per semester for a Faculty Service-Learning Mentor, costing approximately \$8,300 for the year. Also, \$5,000 was provided to cover costs of travel and faculty training expenses related to service-learning. The Director of Students for Community Service and the Community Partnership Coordinator each contribute approximately 50% of their time to fostering service-learning at Fresno State. This equates to approximately \$47,500 in employee time per year.

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Direct financial support and the commitment of employee time have been key to our ability to foster new service-learning courses, sustain faculty involvement and increase the quality of service-learning courses on our campus. One significant challenge will be to sustain a reasonable level of fiscal and employee resource support given the challenging fiscal outlook for the CSU in the coming years.

Students for Community Service (SCS) is the central office charged with developing, promoting and fostering the university’s service-learning efforts. Housed in Academic Affairs, SCS links with departments and programs across campus to provide connections between and support for the many diverse service-learning efforts around the campus. While SCS provides central support, it is understaffed and office space is inadequate to support the wide range of service-learning and related functions.

Service-learning is guided by two committees. The Service-Learning Development Committee, consisting of representatives from each of the eight undergraduate schools/colleges, staff and students, helps to set policies and procedures for service-learning coursework, including the approval of “S” (service-learning) designation of courses. The Community Service-Learning Advisory Council (CSLAC) helps provide guidance to SCS regarding numerous issues, including input on service-learning’s role in the university’s overall service efforts. CSLAC has equal representation from the university community, community based organizations and students.

One important piece of the infrastructure is missing. There is no single university program to coordinate the huge potential of student, staff, and faculty members who could significantly assist the 1,500 nonprofit organizations in California's Central Valley. Annually, 4,700 of the 20,000 California State University, Fresno students provide in excess of 192,000 hours of service. The financial influence on the community is significant: these hours convert to an estimated \$3.2 million in economic impact on the region. The lack of a central node connecting the diverse community service, service-learning, internship, and other experiential learning efforts creates multiple internal and external challenges.

Conclusions and Implications for Educational Effectiveness

In short, our strengths include a rich history of supporting service-learning; wide-ranging support among faculty, administrators and within our guiding documents; the development and availability of large numbers of service-learning courses across the curriculum; guidance provided by existing committees and an experienced Faculty Service-Learning Mentor; and support from and strong links to the university’s community service-learning office, Students for Community Service. In addition, President Welty serves on a number of community service organizations such as GoServe, Campus Compact, American Humanics, and the American Association of State Universities and Colleges American Democracy Project. This demonstration of presidential involvement signals the level of all campus commitment to service and community-based learning.

The major challenges for continued development of service-learning are resource related: sustaining fiscal resources necessary to ensure continued high quality service-learning course offerings; maintaining staffing of SCS; and accessing a centralized office capable of housing the necessary staff and faculty members to maintain one of the leading service-learning programs in the state and nation.

As a substantial body of research supports the pedagogical effectiveness of service-learning, questions for the educational effectiveness review should relate to the effectiveness of the Fresno State structure for supporting service-learning. For example, we might explore the extent of our success in preparing faculty members to incorporate service-learning into their courses, or the quality of the infrastructure for finding and maintaining service-learning placement opportunities. California State University, Fresno's commitment to service-learning provides an excellent working example of the extent to which it meets both WASC Standard 1 ("...clear and conscious sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in the higher education community, and its relationship to society at large") and Standard 2 ("core functions of teaching and learning").

Research: "Providing an Environment that Encourages Exploration, Delivery, and Exchange of Knowledge by Faculty and Staff"

This section addresses the mechanisms to "provide an environment that encourages exploration, delivery, and exchange of knowledge by faculty and staff," and will focus primarily on faculty research. Research at California State University, Fresno is broadly defined to include various scholarly and creative activities. Applied research is especially noted in the university's priorities, and as discussed elsewhere, the scholarship of teaching and learned has recently gained prominence. The importance of research is emphasized by the strategic priority to "engage in high quality research and creative activity in all disciplines, with particular emphasis on applications that support the region." A strong research program is also instrumental in helping the campus meet other strategic priorities related to transforming our region and developing high-quality graduate programs while pursuing the university's goal of achieving the Carnegie classification "Doctoral/Research University-Intensive."

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California State University, Fresno's grant program has expanded its capacity enormously in recent years. By the close of fiscal year 2002-03, sponsored program support will approach \$50 million, nearly quadrupling fiscal year 1996-97 levels. These increases have translated into significantly more research opportunities for faculty. Figure 2 illustrates the dramatic growth in each successive year.

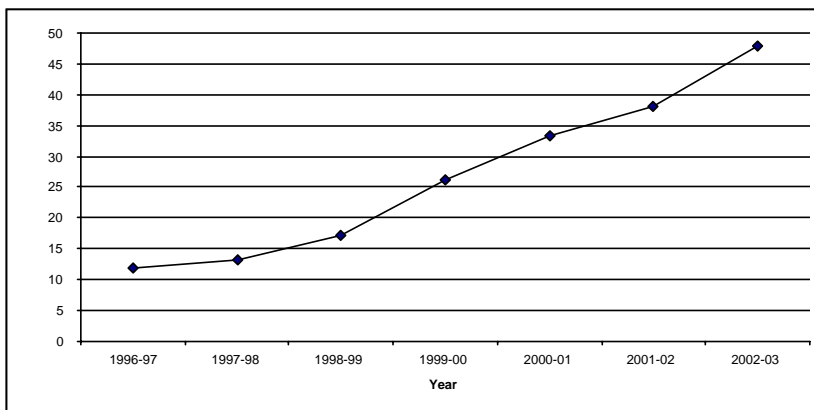


Figure 2. University Grants and Research Office Growth in Support, 1996-97 – 2002-03

Several factors contributed to this rapid increase in externally funded research activity. Research, especially applied research, appears prominently in the last two strategic plans, internal resources have been directed to seed research activities, and the University Grants and Research Office (UGRO) has developed a much stronger, proactive approach to proposal planning, development, and management. Since 1998, Academic Affairs has provided 3 WTU of assigned time to first-year tenure-track faculty. With a match from the new faculty member's school or college, this year-long one-course reduction in teaching load helps new faculty members' transition into the university and establishes their programs of scholarship. Schools and colleges have also developed mini-grant programs that supplement the established California State University program which provides assigned time for creative and scholarly activities (6 WTU maximum).

UGRO has provided substantial financial support from indirect cost recovery to underwrite special project development and research needs, particularly in the sciences and student affairs. It has also increased the number of grant workshops, meetings with faculty, visits to federal and state offices, and other activities designed to stimulate more active grantsmanship. Finally, in 1997 the university became eligible for funding as an Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), which provided somewhat more opportunity for federal support.

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EXEMPLAR: Minority Biomedical Research Support Program

Library facilities are key to research, and a university strategic goal addresses this need: "In support of graduate programs, the university will increase library journal holdings and access to other relevant materials and resources." The Henry Madden Library includes over 1,000,000 volumes, 5,000 ebooks, 10,000 electronic journals, and 100 research databases. It maintains an active and responsive acquisition program, and provides carefully updated technological support for faculty and student research.

In some ways, the explosive growth of research has strained the campus infrastructure. Space, facilities, and funds for equipment maintenance are in short supply. Structures such as specialized research centers (e.g., California Agricultural Technology Institute, Engineering Research Laboratory, and Center for Educational Research and Services), as well as collaborations with external partners (NASA, Department of Energy, Central California Crime Lab) serve to relieve some of the stress. However, these collaborations address only some of the important challenges. For example, as grants have increased in volume and complexity, so have the considerable costs of administering them. Thus, only a fraction of indirect costs are returned to Academic Affairs for use in infrastructure support. The Task Force on the Administration of Grants and Contracts, put in place in 2002 by the president to address this and other grants and research issues, recently completed a detailed analysis of alternative administrative models that have the potential to generate institutional efficiencies without sacrificing research productivity. Changes will likely include consolidation of pre-award and post-award operations under Academic Affairs, separation of grant and research activity from other fund raising operations, and other changes designed to provide colleges, departments and principal investigators with more funds to conduct and sustain research. A key recommendation is that governance of grant and contract activity reside with academic administrators and staff.

The institution is also impacted by the demands on their teaching time felt by faculty who are successful in attracting research support. This is a problem for a relatively few colleges or departments whose faculty who have received large, multi-year grants that require significant time commitments. For Fresno State, the Department of Biology has been particularly impacted in recent years because many faculty have competed successfully for federal and state research awards. On balance, this same department will certainly be strengthened in the long term, as its faculty becomes more knowledgeable in critical and emerging fields of study. In addition, the College of Science and Mathematics benefits from the relatively high indirect cost recovery provided by federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. The key to addressing situations such as this is achieving a delicate balance between

active research and involved teaching and mentoring.

The recent emphasis on faculty research arose from three goals: to maintain the vitality and currency of the teaching faculty, to serve the needs of the region through applied research, and to strengthen the education of our students through involvement in research at both the graduate and undergraduate level. While the structures in place appear to serve the first two goals reasonably well, it is less clear that they effectively foster student involvement in research, particularly at the undergraduate level. Indeed, it may be that the policies and demands on faculty, with, for example, the pressure for publications in refereed journals, work against the involvement of undergraduate students to some degree. This is an area of Institutional Capacity that warrants investigation.

Faculty demographics have favored the rapid shift in priorities towards an increased emphasis on research productivity and quality. In the past five years, 194 tenured faculty members have left the campus, and 212 new tenure-track faculty members have been hired. Personnel policies allow the campus to respond to shifts in emphasis. Thus, expectations for research and creative activity are clearly specified in the probationary plans drafted by first-year tenure-track faculty members. While survey data and anecdotal evidence suggest that the environment for our junior faculty members is less stressful than at campuses where expectations are less clearly articulated, and assigned time for research provides some relief, workload remains high. It is not yet clear that the policies, resources, and demands on faculty are such as to sustain active research activity over the professional life of these new faculty members. We need to be sure that policies and resources are aligned to ensure that success as a research institution does not come at the cost of lower quality teaching programs and reduced student-faculty contact. Concomitantly, we look to active research to stimulate faculty and student inquiry.

The university encourages undergraduate and graduate research as part of the students' broad learning experience. In addition to research conducted in conjunction with course assignments, students participate actively in annual competitions. The Central California Research Symposium, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2004, is an annual forum for students and faculty to present research findings. Over 100 students presented in 2003, most of whom worked with faculty mentors to develop and implement their research methodologies. The winning presenter went on to receive first-place in the Biological and Agricultural category of the CSU Student Research Competition—a system-wide competition implemented by Fresno State over 20 years ago. The Division of Graduate Studies, the McNair Program, and the Honors Program also provide valuable forums for student research.

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EXEMPLAR: Central California Research Symposium

Conclusions and Implications for Educational Effectiveness

Assessing the educational effectiveness of a research program for university is a daunting task requiring complex analysis over time. Purely quantitative measures — the number of proposals submitted, the rate of success relative to comparable institutions, the number of faculty and students involved, etc. — clearly indicate that Fresno State has achieved marked improvement and growth in recent years. Likewise, the quality of research is reflected in the adjudication of peer review panels that have recommended awards for university researchers in an increasing number of departments. The university has devoted significant time and energy to assessing overall research effectiveness, and it has reached a number of primary conclusions.

First, the general direction and growth of the university's grants and research program are beneficial to faculty and students. The overwhelming majority of activities are linked in important ways to specific educational goals, including faculty development, student learning and community service. Because of Fresno State's recent success, deep reductions in state funding will

probably have relatively less impact on the institution's overall effectiveness than they will on comparable state institutions that have not developed their capacities for external support.

Second, the institution needs to continue to focus on providing quality research opportunities for its students, graduate and undergraduate alike. In addition to the forums described above, special attention needs to be paid to involving students in sponsored programs that will enhance their practical experience in research activities while simultaneously providing them with stepping-stones to advanced study or professional employment. A question for the Educational Effectiveness self-study will be the impact on student research of the raised priority of research productivity. Do more undergraduates have the opportunity to work with faculty as student assistants or through independent studies? Or has research become so “high stakes” that faculty members are focusing their attention on graduate students to the exclusion of undergraduates? A related area for examination is the impact of research participation on the students – both graduate and undergraduate. Are those who participate better prepared for subsequent employment and/or further study?

Third, the institution needs to adopt a new grants administration structure that would be governed by academic administrators and research faculty. A new governing configuration of this sort, whether under the university or a new foundation devoted exclusively to grants and contracts, would align the university's activities more closely with the institution's broad mission. It would also be more likely to lead to cost efficiencies, which, in turn, could provide more funding for research activities.

Fourth, the institution should consider providing more infrastructure support for grants and research activities through regular state funding. Currently, the university provides about 15 percent of the costs of grant and contract administration. The remainder is generated from grant funds. Changing this support structure would have significant long-range implications for the university's continued growth in external support which, in turn, would allow the university to attract highly qualified faculty and students, to foster a learning community on campus, to provide needed outreach to the region, and to build the infrastructure needed for broad institutional growth.

The recent successes in increasing research activity at California State University, Fresno resulted from intentional decisions based upon the needs of the region served by the campus. The structures, policies, procedures, and resources supporting research demonstrate our commitment to Standard 1 (“clear and conscious sense of ... essential values and character... and relationship to society at large... search for truth, and the dissemination of knowledge”) and Standard 2 (“core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning”).

C. INTERACTION – “Transformation through Integration of Knowledge and Experience”

Two directions emerged in examination of the Interaction Theme and its relevance to California State University, Fresno: **Campus Communities** [Internal Interaction], and **University Linkages** [External Interaction], and a representative feature was selected from each of these. *Learning Groups* are considered a vital aspect of campus communities because they more fully engage students upon arrival at the university. Such engagement contributes to academic success and increased retention and graduation, especially of at-risk students. *Center/Institute Partnerships* are the most visible sign of university linkages serving the region, which faces many economic and social challenges. The university thus serves as a unique and valuable resource to the community, in full congruence with its vision to be a regionally engaged institution.

Facilitating Interaction for a Stimulating Campus Environment **Campus Communities: Learning Groups**

Two principal components of campus communities are: (1) Academic Engagement and Co-curricular Participation, and (2) Student Life and Extracurricular Involvement. The first of these deals with the student's intellectual development, primarily through student-faculty and student-student interaction. The second addresses the student's social maturation, mainly through student-student interaction. In this essay, the first of these features is highlighted as representative, with specific focus on the formation of *learning-focused groups*.

Academic engagement deals with institutional efforts to intellectually bond the student to the university educational experience. In part, this is accomplished through academic support programs that orient and prepare students (especially those at-risk) to achieve both academic and life success. [See also "Support for Academic Success," in the reflective essay on Opportunity.]

Building on this support structure, there have also been efforts to establish a variety of learning-focused communities and an array of academic-related, co-curricular group activities that reinforce and extend formal classroom learning. In turn, these build on a strong thread of written university commitments, seen especially in two of its educational goals: "Foster a learning community on campus that is actively engaged in discovery of knowledge, development of skills, and acquisition of experience"; and "Instill a culture of continual learning and improvement for all educational endeavors and the systems that support them." To this is added the university's stated mission, which addresses the institution's distinctive surroundings and cultural makeup, melding with the community concept: "The university fosters an environment in which students learn to live in a culturally diverse and changing society. Within that environment, it strives to develop a community. . . . The university seeks and encourages historically underrepresented students to embark upon and complete a university education."

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Based on studies of student success, the supposition here is that retention and academic achievement are to some degree a function of connectivity to communities, both academic and nonacademic, and of engagement in learning and living experiences that encourage intellectual growth and personal development in a collaborative manner. In fact, UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute director Alexander Astin has identified the need to address student disengagement from academic studies and co-curricular activities as the number one priority in higher education today [2003 keynote presentation to the WASC Annual Conference]. Isolated and lonely students are more likely to drop out. This is believed to be particularly true among first-generation college-goers, for whom belonging to a community can be essential to their retention. Fresno State draws heavily from disadvantaged populations and thus has sizable numbers of at-risk students who stand to benefit from such connective interaction. As such, developing "an engaged and diverse student learning community" is actively pursued as a strategic priority of the campus.

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A final important support mechanism bears mention: the university's dedication to realization of a "community of scholars," as seen in its ongoing efforts to establish an honor code. These efforts clearly speak to the declared institutional purpose to "establish an environment reflecting and encouraging integrity and ethical standards in individual behavior and organizational conduct." The evolutionary process shows the Smittcamp Family Honors College exploring the possibility of developing an honor code at its fall retreat and Spring Colloquium (AY 2002-03). In turn, the Craig School of Business initiated the development of an honor code in spring 2003. And most recently, this has moved to the university level: the president, upon the recommendation of the Academic Senate Executive Committee in spring 2003, has appointed a university-wide group to consider the matter, employing the Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship of the Kremen School of Education and Human Development.

EXEMPLAR – Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

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In the 1990s, the university adopted an enrollment management system that sought, among many aims, to increase freshman intake and achieve a more balanced admission of four-year native students and two-year transfer students from community colleges. Significant numbers of college-eligible high school seniors, unfortunately, are not college-ready. Learning-focused communities, combined with academic support systems and remedial work, are part of the strategy for success. Two categories of academic-related communities are presented: those that first-semester freshmen can join; and those for which only junior level and transfer students are eligible.

Communities for Freshmen

Because of the inevitable cross-cutting nature of the Interaction theme, lower-division programs central to community engagement of at-risk students have been reviewed in the Opportunity reflective essay: **University 1** (An Introduction to the University) and the **Faculty Mentoring Program**. Their common aim regarding purposeful community relevance, however, must be noted.

Further examples are numerous. In fact, the campus has a long history of **learning communities**, in which students enroll as a group in multiple courses. In many of these, the students' entire schedule for the semester consists of a set of linked courses. These intensive experiences generally involve travel, require the full commitment of multiple faculty members, and are very expensive to run. Beginning in fall 2001, the university explored the possibility of linking enrollments in sections of two or three General Education courses through block scheduling. As enrollment in the learning communities was voluntary, intensive advertising was needed to obtain adequate enrollment in the course sections. Implementation of General Education-based learning communities was complicated by the transition to PeopleSoft registration and to a new registration calendar. One of the recommendations of the Task Force on Student Success in spring 2003 was to further develop plans for learning communities, and we anticipate doing so next year.

Academic Enhancement Services of the [Student Affairs Division](#) offers two programs, **University Migrant Services** and **South-East Asian Student Services**, which provide counseling and support to special populations particularly at risk. Through mentoring and advising as well as cultural enrichment and community service activities these ethnically homogeneous students from migrant labor families and refugee-rooted families develop academic and leadership skills that help them succeed.

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To celebrate the success of many first-generation college-goers special graduation exercises are held to honor Latino, African-American, and Asian-American students in front of their families and friends. These recognition ceremonies are a joining of university communities with their counterpart communities in the region served by California State University, Fresno. But they also serve importantly as inspiration to continuing students to complete their education as have their friends and relatives ahead of them.

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The [Smittcamp Family Honors College](#) has formed a tight-knit community of cross-disciplinary scholars; last year it moved into new quarters where students can gather informally. These students share a number of special honors courses that substitute for regular General Education courses. Cohort activities are promoted. An annual retreat in the Sierra, a year-long colloquium series, as well as involvement in student government and other campus community activities have all made Smittcamp the model for individual colleges/schools, which have been challenged to develop similar upper-division Honors programs for their own continuing and transfer students.

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Undeclared students (freshmen, sophomores) receive academic counseling from the **Advising Services** office. But they lack an identification with a cohort group pursuing lower division prerequisite courses for a chosen major field of study. Academic departments can be an intellectual home and common interest community that is better able to track students and connect them to other students through a myriad of program activities and clubs. Advising Services points out these advantages of declaring a major sooner rather than later, to lower the risk of dropping out.

Another population group that contains academically at-risk students is **student-athletes**, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds – especially in the revenue-generating sports. In 1996 the football program instituted an “Academic Game Plan” program for its athletes, which has demonstrated significant increases in G.P.A. across the board. This has minimized athletic eligibility problems of underclassmen and increased graduation rates. Variations of this program have been adopted by some other teams that also recruit some nonqualifiers who must sit out their freshman year in order to establish a satisfactory academic record. The Athletics Academic Services Office provides on-site academic support for its team communities of student-athletes on the road during away games as well as at home.

Communities for Upper-Division Students

Honors programs have been established by the Craig School of Business and by the psychology department in the College of Science and Mathematics. Other colleges are in various stages of planning. These are intended to engage outstanding community college transfer students; late-blossoming native students; high achievers who enrolled here despite non-acceptance into the Smittcamp Family Honors College; as well as continuing students of the Smittcamp Family Honors College. The programs provide a sequence of intellectually challenging honors experiences in the junior and senior years for a cohort of students who move through the program together. Attracting and holding these students has an important educational effect in regular classes, where their presence is likely to help maintain academic standards and to promote participation in classroom and co-curricular activities.

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Many student clubs and organizations, supported by member dues and Associated Students Inc. (ASI) funds, are found in the colleges/schools and their departments, where faculty serve as advisors. ASI’s Instructionally Related Funds are typically available to academic major organizations sponsoring field trips and events. Student chapters of discipline-based or professional associations may be awarded funds to participate in intercollegiate competitions, for which teams prepare intensely under faculty supervision for months. These co-curricular activities enable students to interact with faculty, demonstrate academic knowledge, and practice disciplinary skills with respected professionals as judges of their competencies.

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The **Solutions Center** is a team-centered, problem-solving experience appropriate for upper-division students. Established in the late 1990s, this center creates linkages with private sector sponsors, giving them an opportunity to participate directly with students and in university programs. Projects involve teams of three to five students, working under the direction of a faculty member for a semester or more on a problem identified and funded by a sponsor. Students are expected to put into practice the principles and techniques they have learned in the classroom, and to deal with the dynamics of teamwork, budget, and schedule restraints. The program is intended to be a culminating experience for students.

EXEMPLAR: Solutions Center

Conclusions and Implications for Educational Effectiveness

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The initial strategic plan of 1993 identified “lack of student involvement in university life” as an area for improvement and called for “encouraging student involvement in their own education”

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through a variety of academically-related co-curricular activities. The current strategic plan reiterates this priority through two of its goals. In turn, the university has responded by creating and expanding opportunities for student engagement – many, through connective, learning-focused communities. Structures, processes, policies, and resources have been marshaled in support of this commitment. Even though campus percentages for retention are among the highest in the California State University system, we continue to work on improving retention rates.

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At least ten of the goals in the current (2001-06) strategic plan relate to improvement of the campus community environment, engagement in quality interactions among students and others, and creation of greater connectedness to the intellectual and social life of the campus. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee will have its first real chance to evaluate progress and provide constructive feedback to administrative divisions responsible for implementation of the plan in the fall of 2003, when *Milestone* reports for the initial year and a half (spring 2002 onward) are available for review. Initial review suggests that the plan needs to emphasize educational effectiveness in its goals, even though one of the four transcendent strategic directions recognizes “a shift in orientation from a teaching community to a community of learners.” In fall 2003, the Accreditation Steering Committee will present its recommendations to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, which has agreed to address this deficiency.

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While the organizational and financial capacity of the institution to develop campus communities has been greatly enhanced over the last decade in an effort to intellectually and socially engage a changing demographic mix of students, it is difficult to measure the impacts of these efforts. However, the operative assumption has been that such interaction is a positive force that contributes to student success. The issue for the university is the degree of its effectiveness in facilitating various forms of interaction in support of a stimulating campus learning community. One component of the Educational Effectiveness Review will be the development of an integrated perspective of how learning-focused communities can be improved and how more students can be drawn into them as active members.

Serving the Region and Student Learning via Interaction with the Community

University Linkages: Center/Institute Partnerships

In examining this feature, two principal areas of emphasis emerge: (1) Community Service and Intellectual/Cultural Enrichment, and (2) Institutional Collaboration and Professional Engagement. The first deals primarily either with students forming a service ethic and seeking service opportunities with off-campus organizations, or with on-campus entities that provide services to the community or make university program activities accessible for public benefit. The second addresses administrator, faculty, staff, and student professional involvement in campus-based entities that work with regional bodies such as cultural groups, non-profit organizations, government agencies, industry associations, educational districts, professional societies, and the like. The present essay highlights the latter component, emphasizing particularly the establishment of *center/institute partnerships* as a representative feature.

The university mission statement reinforces the vision of California State University, Fresno “to be one of the nation’s premier interactive universities” by the assertion: “through applied research, technical assistance, training and other related public service activities, the university anticipates continuing and expanding partnerships and linkages with business, education, industry, and government.” Two Institutional Purposes further this emphasis: (1) “Be a leading partner in a education/training, research, and cultural affairs with industry, government, school districts, and community groups for economic development and improved quality of life”; and (2) “Promote and support outstanding scholarly/creative activity and pure/applied research by faculty, particularly the generation and extension of knowledge benefiting the region.” Centers and institutes are key contributors to this portion of the mission, though specialized programs and university-level coordinating mechanisms also play their part.

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The first strategic plan in 1993 assumed “continued emphasis on regional solutions to area problems” and recognized “a strong tradition of applied research” as an institutional strength. One of the nine emphases in that plan was “Linkages with Region,” which called for actively developing partnerships. The successor plans have included this emphasis as well. The aim is to utilize the expertise of faculty and technical/support staff to address the challenges of society through research and scholarly/creative activity, information dissemination, and training projects. This essay reflects upon the capacity of the institution to be educationally effective as a resource to the broad community of constituents in delivering programs and activities that serve diverse needs of the region.

To thrive in a continually changing environment that presents numerous complex challenges for the region, an institution must be relevant and engaged with constituents and stakeholders in addressing problems and exploiting opportunities. This is especially true for an institution of higher learning in an area with a depressed economy and a society underdeveloped in terms of human potential. A symbiotic relationship exists between this comprehensive university and its surrounding community, which has been very supportive of Fresno State's many service endeavors to the San Joaquin Valley.

Another way the university interacts with the community is via its numerous centers and institutes. Some are university-wide in scope (e.g., Interdisciplinary Spatial Information Systems); others are college/school specific (e.g., University Business Center). There are umbrella-like organizations (e.g., California Agricultural Technology Institute (CATI)); and there are self-contained entities (e.g., Chicano and Latin American Research Center). Broad community-oriented bodies (e.g., Kenneth L. Maddy Institute of Public Affairs) exist, along with sector-oriented ones (e.g., Central Valley Health Policy Institute). Some are general in subject area (e.g., Center for Economic Education), while others are more specifically targeted (e.g., Joyce M. Huggins Early Childhood Education Center). The genesis of these centers and institutes can also be quite different. Sometimes a coordinating unit is created for efficient and effective collaboration of related programs (e.g., Central California Futures Institute). Other times, centers and institutes spawn new ones (e.g., Center for Food Science and Nutrition Research, by CATI).

EXEMPLAR: Central Valley Health Policy Institute

A recent Central California Futures Institute "Survey of Institutes and Research Centers" identified over 50 entities (current list: http://academicaffairs.csufresno.edu/centers_institutes.htm). This number represents a substantial increase over the last decade, suggesting that university policies and processes have fostered a spirit of entrepreneurialism that has helped enable the expansion to occur. Highlights of the survey results included:

- Fifty percent of centers and institutes had annual funding up to \$100,000. Thirty-six percent were supported between \$100,001 and \$1 million. Fourteen percent received above \$1 million.
- External funding was almost double internal funding, with a quarter of responses not specifying the mix.
- One quarter of the partnerships was with the business sector, and another quarter was with public agencies. Seventeen percent were with education bodies, and another 17 percent were with non-profit community organizations. Approximately 5 percent each were with the community-at-large, healthcare entities, and ethnic groups.

Organizational Support

A key policy decision, made two decades ago, to not require that all outreach and training be channeled through the Division of Continuing and Global Education (as done on virtually all other CSU campuses), established a permissive environment that allowed two major organizational appendages to the schools of Agriculture and of Business to start up in the 1980s: namely, the California Agricultural Technology Institute (CATI) and the University Business

Center (UBC) – each with its own facility and support staff. These structures modeled what could be done across campus in terms of forming partnerships and marshalling resources to promote “institutional collaboration and professional engagement” of faculty and technical staff in serving not only the economic needs of the region, but also the political, social, and cultural needs of the community. This approach, involving minimal direct oversight by central administration, became the norm on campus. Recently, the formation of the Fresno Area Collaborative Regional Initiative has led to even further horizons for productive campus-community involvement.

EXEMPLAR: California Agricultural Technology Institute

As discussed under “Institutional Context,” another key policy decision, made in the 1990s at the CSU system level was to decentralize administration to the campuses. California State University, Fresno took this one step further and devolved more responsibility from the central administration to the colleges/schools, which had the effect of empowering them to take greater initiatives in many realms beyond traditional academic programs.

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Particularly instrumental in fostering engagement has been the proliferation of advisory boards at all levels of the university, especially those attached to the institutes, centers, and programs through which faculty and technical staff become professionally active in regional research, outreach, and training that serve constituencies.

Conclusions and Implications for Educational Effectiveness

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Two significant internal studies contribute to an assessment of institutional capacity for institutional linkages. First, during the “planning to plan” phase of the current strategic plan, seven focus groups interviewed approximately 50 members of the external community. Participants divulged their sense of key social and economic priorities in the region and revealed their perception of the university’s responsiveness to community needs. Among major findings were the following:

- The university was viewed positively in relation to its engagement and meeting the needs of the external community, being judged to have made a “quantum leap” in service to the region during the second plan period (1997-2000).
- Access to the university’s resources was viewed as difficult, however, because of the decentralized organizational structure of the institution. Focus group members agreed that communications regarding university programs, services, and resources need to be strengthened – especially in the area of university-community partnerships (including student engagement in the community). Two strategic plan goals were formulated to address the concerns about access and communication.

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Secondly, the “Survey of Institutes and Research Centers” (March 2001), conducted for the Strategic Planning Task Force on External Partnerships & Collaboration, reported judgments about these partnerships over the past four years. Most had become stronger (64.3 percent), some were unchanged (28.6 percent), and a few had become weaker (7.1 percent). Reasons were not reported; though the recommendation that external partnerships be enhanced clearly indicates the perception that existing constraints may have hampered growth from the status quo for some, and perhaps contributed to the diminished strength of others.

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Of recommendations offered by the directors of the university-based research centers and institutes in this report, 87% identified the need for additional resources (funding, staffing, and space). Other significant responses were to increase marketing and outreach (11.8%) and improve intra-campus collaboration of institutes/internal policies.

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An important structural deficiency was identified under the recommendations on marketing/outreach and intra-campus collaboration – namely, the lack of an entry portal for efficient referral so that the community might be able to identify and gain quick access to a

center/institute that could address their needs. Further, the report indicates the centers /institutes do not necessarily have benchmarks for measuring performance and determining their effectiveness. It is not known whether many programs and activities offered through or independent of these entities are evaluated by participants or sponsors. Developing ways to evaluate external partnerships and collaborations and value of the university's participation in them was therefore adopted as a strategic plan goal. A scholarly evaluation of issues raised regarding the need for improved communication, access, and evaluation on the Fresno State campus is a planned component of the Educational Effectiveness review.

SECTION IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As shown in the preceding pages and their accompanying documentation, California State University, Fresno has a strong sense of its unique identity and institutional purposes, and a visible commitment to its vision of service as a premier interactive regional university. The choice of a thematic approach and the themes selected for this self-study—Opportunity, Exploration, and Interaction—in themselves reflect the creative, broad-ranging, yet integrative role the university recognizes as its charge. Through the lens of these themes, analysis of representative features leads to an appreciation of the multifaceted complexity of resources, processes, and structures underlying the institution's capacity to fulfill its educational mission. Summaries of specific feature-related findings appear at the close of each essay. Their conclusions, however, are relevant to the effective functioning of the entire university.

Many strides have been made since the last accreditation review, in an ongoing pursuit of proactive responsiveness to both internal and external forces. Importantly, strategic planning has become integral to campus processes, which support informed and rational evaluation, decision-making, and implementation of policies and programs. Moreover, a formal linkage and interface with accreditation self-study has been established. Plans are operationalized through agreed-upon and published measures of success. This open climate supports the highly consultative processes characteristic of the campus. While consultation may occasionally result in inefficiencies, it also fosters a collegial atmosphere and a stronger sense of shared vision. It is further anticipated that commitments to planning, openness, and consultation will help the university weather the difficulties expected to result from the current state budget crisis. Increased non-state funding through grants and contracts and development efforts will continue to enhance the state-financed instructional core.

The university serves the region well. Recruiting efforts have resulted in a student population that reflects the demographics of the culturally diverse central valley. While a remarkable array of services helps maintain a comparatively high retention rate, we continue to explore a variety of means to improve student engagement. However, according to the Student Success Task Force, most efforts are focused on first-time freshmen, and we may wish to examine support structures for other groups of students (e.g., transfer, graduate, and distance learning students).

The university also contributes to the economic viability of the region through grants and contracts (especially applied research), service-learning, community service, and the activities of a multitude of centers and institutes. The enormous range of activities represents an entrepreneurial spirit that should not be stifled by over-organization. On the other hand, as is the case for student support services, some additional organizational structures could provide for greater internal coordination and collaboration, as well as an increased external awareness of university resources and access points to address gaps and unmet needs. The recent explosive growth in research activity suggests the need for ways to assess the impacts on students, both undergraduate and graduate, of participation in research, as well as structures, processes, and reward systems to encourage student participation in research.

In summary, information collected for this review of institutional capacity suggests that California State University, Fresno is served well by its commitment to planning, openness, and consultation. As a large, complex organization, the university seeks to find the appropriate balance between a decentralized, entrepreneurial culture and a more highly controlled academic structure. Continued progress in fulfilling the institution's declared goals and associated outcomes for accreditation in the educational effectiveness stage should serve the university and its constituents well in accomplishing the mission and achieving the vision.

Core Commitments and Standards

References to the Criteria for Review (CFR) cited herein indicate that institutional purposes and educational integrity of Standard I are being met, especially as noted in the Introduction and Institutional Context sections of this report. Standard III, which in the main also addresses institutional capacity; has most all of its CFR checked related to: faculty and staff; fiscal, physical, and information resources; and organizational structures and decision-making processes. The partial focus of Standard IV on strategic thinking and planning is also well referenced with CFR in the Institutional Context section, as might be expected given its emphasis in our proposal due to its well-developed status on campus.

The Preparatory Review report used selected CFR regarding the capacity, not the effectiveness, of the institution's commitment to learning and improvement in Standard IV as well as Standard II's emphasis on: teaching and learning; scholarship and creative activity; and support for student learning. The citations are spread across the Thematic Features section and the Institutional Context section; they demonstrated the staying power of the opportunity, exploration, and interaction themes for the university in addressing the WASC Standards. The Self-Study Steering Committee is satisfied that the thematic approach, coupled with the strategic planning process and goals, presented in the reaccreditation proposal is, in fact, working well as a reflective, analytical framework to examine institutional capacity and to prepare for the educational effectiveness stage of the accreditation review.

Plan for Educational Effectiveness Review

The Educational Effectiveness Review will be centered on the six research questions, two for each theme, that were formulated as an addendum to the WASC accreditation review proposal. Since the research questions are quite broad, more specific questions will be generated, so that answers can be obtained using existing data sources as well as additional research to be carried out prior to the Educational Effectiveness review.

The questions will be addressed by small research teams of faculty, staff, and administrators, each led by a WASC Steering Committee member. Each research team will have partial freedom in selecting the narrower research questions, with oversight and coordination by the WASC Steering Committee. In addition to preparing a report that responds to the research questions, the research teams will be charged with drafting strategic goals relating to educational effectiveness. These goals and associated milestones will be submitted to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for approval and incorporated into the university strategic plan. This process is intended to fully integrate educational effectiveness considerations into strategic planning.

The broad research questions are listed in Appendix F, along with sample questions of the type expected to be addressed in the self-study of educational effectiveness. Research support will be provided by the office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment and the Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Sources of evidence relevant to each question have been identified, but research teams may elect to gather additional data, for example, through surveys or focus groups.