

FINAL DRAFT December 1, 2016

WSCUC Interim Report

Name of Institution: California State University, Northridge

Person Submitting the Report: Cynthia Z. Rawitch, special assistant to the Provost and emeritus faculty, for Elizabeth T. Adams, interim ALO & associate vice president/ Undergraduate Studies.

Report Submission Date: December 5, 2016

Statement on Report Preparation

Briefly describe in narrative form the process of report preparation, providing the names and titles of those involved. Because of the focused nature of an Interim Report, the widespread and comprehensive involvement of all institutional constituencies is not normally required. Faculty, administrative staff, and others should be involved as appropriate to the topics being addressed in the preparation of the report. Campus constituencies, such as faculty leadership and, where appropriate, the governing board, should review the report before it is submitted to WSCUC, and such reviews should be indicated in this statement.

Preparation of the Interim Report was begun in late Spring 2016 by Dr. Michael Neubauer, then-vice provost, who reached out to those Academic Affairs operations responsible for the five areas identified in the reaccreditation letter as needing further attention. Additionally, other divisions of campus—including Student Affairs, University Advancement and Administration and Finance—were asked to assist with their expertise. This involvement and the personnel responsible for contributions to the report are detailed below.

Dr. Cynthia Z. Rawitch, special assistant to the Provost and emeritus faculty, was asked in late September to oversee and complete work on the Interim Report, and WSCUC granted the University a deadline extension to December 15, 2016. Previously, Dr. Rawitch led the teams and process in the successful reaccreditation of CSUN in 2012 and served as ALO (2005-2013).

The section on “continuing development of assessment of student learning outcomes” involved participation by:

- Dr. James Solomon, director of Academic Assessment and Program Review
- Dr. Bonnie Paller, former director of Assessment and Program Review
- assessment liaisons for the academic departments
- Division of Student Affairs

“Refining program review” was prepared by:

- Dr. James Solomon, director of Academic Assessment and Program Review
- Dr. Eli Bartle, Coordinator of Program Review

“Continuing improvements in advising” was prepared by a cross-divisional ad-hoc group under the leadership of Shelly Thompson, director of Undergraduate Studies. The group included the associate dean for the College of Health and Human Development, Dr. Tami Abourezk; the interim director of Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP), Shiva Parsa; the director of the Student Services Center/EOP satellite in the David Nazarian College of Business and Economics, Fariba Farzan; the director of First Year International Student Advisement, Geraldine Sare; and the assistant director, Office of Student Involvement and Development (Student Affairs), Christopher Aston.

“Raising undergraduate completion rates” was prepared by Dr. Rawitch with information supplied by Dr. Elizabeth Adams, interim Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and associate vice president/Student Success; Dr. Kristy Michaud, professor of political science and director of the Office of Student Success Innovations (OSSI); and Dr. Cheryl Spector, director of Academic First Year Experiences, along with members of the Graduation Initiative 2025 committee and the OSSI advisory group.

“Addressing ongoing state funding challenges” was prepared by the Division of Administration and Finance: Sharon Eichten, associate vice president for Budget Planning & Management; Deborah Wallace, associate vice president for Financial Services; and Dr. Edith Winterhalter, director of Administrative Services. Dr. Crist Khachikian, associate vice president/Research and Graduate Studies, participated on behalf of Academic Affairs in the discussion of grants.

Statistical analysis and data, as well as the majority of graphs and tables, were prepared by Dr. Bettina Huber, special assistant to the Provost and recently retired director of Institutional Research.

Jeffrey Noblitt, associate vice president for Marketing & Communication/ University Advancement, provided the content for “institutional context.”

“Identification of other changes and issues currently facing the institution” was prepared by President Dianne Harrison; Dr. Yi Li, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs; Dr. Adams and Dr. Rawitch.

A preliminary draft of this Interim Report was reviewed in early November by:

- President Dianne Harrison (Nov.1)
- the President’s Cabinet (Nov. 7)
- Associated Students President Sevag Alexanian (Nov. 14)
- CSU Faculty Trustee Steven Stepanek and Student Trustee Jorge Reyes Salinas (Nov. 14)
- Faculty President Dr. Adam Swenson (Nov. 1)
- Provost’s associate vice presidents and staff (Nov. 7)
- Academic deans (Nov. 8)
- Faculty Senate Executive Committee (Nov. 10)
- Review copies also were made available to the Student Affairs Leadership Team.

The draft was posted to the CSUN WSCUC website <http://www.csun.edu/~instrsch/wasc/index.html> on November 30.

List of Topics Addressed in this Report

Please list the topics identified in the action letter(s) and that are addressed in this report.

In its March 8, 2012 letter to Interim President Harry Hellenbrand, the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities emphasized five areas for further attention. Each is addressed in this report:

- continuing development of assessment of student learning outcomes,
- refining program review,
- continuing improvements in advising,
- raising undergraduate completion rates,
- addressing ongoing state funding challenges.

Institutional Context

Very briefly describe the institution's background; mission; history, including the founding date and year first accredited; geographic locations; and other pertinent information so that the Interim Report Committee panel has the context to understand the issues discussed in the report.

California State University, Northridge celebrates its 58th anniversary in 2016. In the nearly 60 years since its founding in 1958 as San Fernando Valley State College, the institution has grown from a suburban college of 3,300 students in 17 temporary structures taking classes concentrated in education and teaching to an urban university with approximately 40,000 students in 97 buildings that house just under 6,300 courses each term, including 244 fully online and 412 hybrid.

In the years since its first accreditation in 1960, the institution matured from an extension of the normal school at Los Angeles State College to a hub of innovation and research with major economic impact in Southern California and beyond. In those years, the institution changed from a virtually all-white, majority male, traditionally-aged student body to one of the most diverse in the nation, with its stated mission “to enable students to realize their educational goals” and its first priority “to promote the welfare and intellectual progress of students.” In the second decade of the 21st century, CSUN is a public, urban, comprehensive and minority-serving (MSI) university (Carnegie Classification Master’s I), the second-largest public master’s-level institution in the country (*Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*). For a brief discussion of the University mission and priorities, see “CSUN Shines for the Next Decade: Planning and Priorities as an Engaged Institution” <https://mycsun.app.box.com/v/csun-planning-priorities> .

Renamed California State University, Northridge in 1972, CSUN now embraces both regionality and disciplinarity, having introduced new ethnically-focused disciplines and majors over the years (e.g. Africana Studies, Chicano/a Studies and Queer Studies, among others), while retaining such traditional disciplines as philosophy, English literature and biology.

Complementing each other, both new and traditional programs address the needs of our highly diverse student body with a wide range of interests and educational expectations. The changing University demographics—coupled with our mission to improve K-12 education—have placed pedagogical research among our priorities and, as you will see in a later section, among the ways we support student success and learning while helping to fund the University in times of decreased state support.

CSUN has served as the educational bridge to a better life for tens of thousands of students. The color of the students' skins may be different, the language their parents speak at home may be different, their preparation for college often is inadequate. All the same, there is no difference between what the institution did for Robert Hilburn, who graduated in San Fernando Valley State College's first class and went on to become the rock music critic of the *Los Angeles Times*, and the 18-year-old freshman who will graduate to become the hip-hop critic of *LATimes.com*. No difference between what the institution did for Yvonne Chan, who received her master's degree in Special Education in 1976 and went on to become the principal of the Vaughn Next Century Learning Center in the San Fernando Valley, and the current liberal studies major who will use her degrees to help shape the future of public education. A different world but the same relevant, quality education for our students and service to our community. Put simply, CSUN is where individuals rise.

CSUN is located on a 356-acre park-like setting in the San Fernando Valley, at the northern edge of Los Angeles. The Valley—as it is known by most—has an approximate population of 1.8 million and would be the fourth largest city in the United States were it independent of L.A. Serving more students on Pell Grants than any other institution in California, CSUN is one of the most diverse universities in the country, ranked third by the *Wall Street Journal* for providing a diverse learning environment. It has been recognized by *Insight into Diversity*, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* and the National Role Models for Diversity conference. In keeping with its size, the University ranks 13th in awarding bachelor's degrees to underrepresented minority students and seventh in awarding bachelor's degrees to Hispanic students. It educates the largest number of Armenian students outside of Armenia, serves the 13th largest Jewish student population in the U.S. and enrolls the largest number of deaf and hard-of-hearing students of any state university in the country. In 2016, *U.S. News and World Report* cited CSUN as having the second highest transfer student population in the country. It has the second largest number of international students among comprehensive master's institutions in the U.S. The journal *Nature* recently named CSUN a Rising Star for Research; it was the only public university in California on the list of 25 institutions. The National Science Foundation ranks CSUN in the top five nationally among similar institutions for graduates who go on to earn doctorates in the sciences, and the National Institutes of Health recently awarded CSUN nearly \$22 million to enhance the diversity of the country's biomedical workforce.

Individual departments and colleges also are highly ranked. For example, the *Hollywood Reporter* ranked CSUN's film and music programs in the top 25 in the country. *Variety* magazine concurred, ranking the film program in its top 40 in the world. As the third-largest business program west of the Mississippi, the David Nazarian College of Business and Economics places CSUN among the top 5 percent of business-degree-granting institutions in the

world, based on AACSB Accreditation. College Choice ranks CSUN's accounting program third in the nation.

Northridge is one of 23 campuses in the California State University (CSU), offering 68 bachelor's degrees and 58 master's degrees. We offer doctoral degree programs in education (Fall 2008) and physical therapy (Fall 2012) and are developing one in audiology. The numbers of new transfer students and new freshmen entering the University each Fall have been largely equivalent in recent years, with First Time Freshmen (4,501) barely outnumbering First Time Transfers (4,457) in Fall 2016, followed by new graduate students (1,421). The number of students qualified for admission and applying for the opportunity has led CSUN to limit new enrollment in order to better serve the students we have and improve their graduation rates.

Academic Year 2015/2016 saw the University's largest graduating class ever, with more than 11,000 graduates. As you will see elsewhere in this report, six-year graduation rates for First Time Freshmen climbed from 40 percent to 50 percent in the past decade.

The University is organized in five administrative divisions: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administration and Finance, Information Technology and University Advancement, a fairly typical structure but one that is characterized here by cross-divisional collaboration and cooperation. Academic Affairs is organized into nine academic colleges: the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication; the David Nazarian College of Business and Economics; the Michael D. Eisner College of Education; the College of Engineering and Computer Science; the Tseng College of Extended Learning; and the Colleges of Health and Human Development, Humanities, Science and Mathematics and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The Oviatt Library is part of Academic Affairs.

Response to Issues Identified by the Commission

This main section of the report should address the issues identified by the Commission in its action letter(s) as topics for the Interim Report. Each topic identified in the Commission's action letter should be addressed. The team report (on which the action letter is based) may provide additional context and background for the institution's understanding of issues. Provide a full description of each issue, the actions taken by the institution that address this issue, and an analysis of the effectiveness of these actions to date. Have the actions taken been successful in resolving the problem? What is the evidence supporting progress? What further problems or issues remain? How will these concerns be addressed, by whom, and under what timetable? How will the institution know when the issue has been fully addressed? Please include a timeline that outlines planned additional steps with milestones and expected outcomes. Responses should be no longer than five pages per issue.

Continuing development of assessment of student learning outcomes

In its March 8, 2012 reaccreditation letter, WASC's Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities commends CSUN for "expanding outcomes assessment widely across its programs" while noting that "variability among departments persists." The Commission acknowledges "the work that CSUN has done in developing 'Fundamental Learning Competencies' as a framework for university-level assessment." The letter urges the University

“to move forward with its plans to ensure that each program adopts sound assessment methods, especially direct methods, and utilizes findings to improve learning.”

When CSUN underwent its last full reaccreditation review, its assessment was still developing. The focus was on establishing student learning assessment at the degree and/or department levels, as well as on obtaining faculty support for and participation in ongoing assessment. Much time was spent (and continues to be spent) constructing instruments for direct assessment of student learning—including identifying relevant outcomes, creating signature assignments and developing scoring rubrics—while building the departmental structures needed. As the Commission’s letter notes, the University successfully established such a regimen and achieved faculty “buy-in” by early 2012.

A major problem, however, was that a number of departments adopted indirect measures of assessment (often making use of student surveys), rather than direct assessment measures of course/program student learning outcomes (SLOs)—a tendency noted in the Commission letter. While the use of indirect assessment is not solely responsible for the observed “variability” in the University’s application of assessment results to improve learning, indirect assessment tends not to produce the kind of decisive data necessary for making programmatic, pedagogical and curricular change. We believe reliance on indirect assessment probably played a significant role in reducing the level of “closing the loop” activities that the University might otherwise have achieved by 2012.

An equally important factor is that in the years leading up to reaccreditation, departments were still coming to understand the value of formal SLO assessment at the program level. With outcomes still in various stages of development and instruments frequently experimental, results often were indecisive, ambiguous or invalid to those conducting them. This, quite appropriately, led to hesitancy in applying the results to making pedagogical change.

As the examples presented below show, assessment is a decentralized process at the University, with decisions on what to assess, how to assess and how to report results varying widely. This decentralization is not accidental and reflects our conviction that the most valuable types of assessment are selected and devised by those charged with doing assessment and making change based on the results. At the same time, to ensure learning outcomes uniformity with respect to the University’s core competencies, institution-level assessments with common instruments and scorings also are conducted, creating an interlocking system of assessments at both the program and the institutional level. These institution-level assessments are described later in this report.

The University addresses concerns about assessment in two major ways:

- through the natural maturation of its assessment regimen;
- through continuing education of faculty to the value and necessity for direct assessment utilized to improve learning.

Of course, the University’s assessment was maturing even as reaccreditation was completed. These positive changes are revealed in the annual reports submitted by departments and colleges to the Office of Academic Assessment and Program Review (OAAPR), since Fall 2012. A survey of these reports (from 2011/12 to 2015/16) reveals a nearly universal adoption of direct

assessment practices, along with a significant amount of loop-closing activity. Here are some examples of changes made:

- the Geography Department's 2011/12 report describes adding assignments to two upper division courses to enhance instruction in reading comprehension of professional journals <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/121254>;
- the History Department's 2012/13 report describes the creation of a writing/tutoring center to address student writing deficits, as well as the substitution of essay assignments for multiple-choice exams <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.2/4749>;
- the Chicano/a Studies Department's 2012/13 report describes the creation of a department Moodle page to provide a centralized source of assessment and pedagogical materials to faculty; <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.2/4484>;
- the Child and Adolescent Development Department's 2012/13 report describes formation of a Research Methods Faculty Group to ensure uniform course content and delivery in two upper division courses <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.2/4403>;
- the Geological Sciences' 2013/14 report describes a complete redesign of its undergraduate major in response to assessment results <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/131386>;
- the Electrical Engineering Department's 2013/14 report describes adding an ethics component to its Senior Design course in response to assessment results <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/131378>;
- the MS in Accountancy program's 2013/14 report discusses adding a third culminating experience in response to assessment results <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/131066>;
- the Mathematics Department's 2013/14 report describes development of an online tutoring program for Freshman Calculus <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/132347>;
- the Theatre Department's 2014/15 report describes the addition of a new course in Stage Management <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/157348>;
- the Radiologic Sciences' 2014/15 report describes implementing a new requirement that students write reports on their educational experiences at professional conferences <http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/157393>;

(See Appendix A, Annual Survey of Department/Program Assessment Reports, 2012-2015, for the complete list.)

To further emphasize the critical role of applying results to pedagogical improvement, the OAAPR director revised the annual report form in 2014/15 to structure assessment cyclically, moving from the measurement of student learning to the analysis of measured results to the application of that analysis for learning improvements, and then cycling back to the measurement of student learning. The departments are responsible for determining whether these adjustments have been successful; their determinations are included in their annual assessment reports. (Of course, the considerable number of CSUN departments that are externally accredited also are judged by their external accreditors as to the efficacy of their student learning interventions.)

It is the responsibility of the Provost's Office, with the assistance of the OAAPR director, to ensure that departments/programs use direct assessment and that the results are used to improve

learning. To that end, the director monitors annual reports for continued striving toward change and progress. The timeline for some of the recent and future activities includes:

- 2014/15: Revise the annual assessment report form to highlight the need to use direct student learning measures and then to assess the success of those applications. COMPLETED.
- 2015/16: Assess the success of the new report form. Conducted by the OAAPR, followed by acceptance and full adoption of the form. COMPLETED.
- 2015/16: Complete SLOs and begin formal assessment in the Mathematics department. COMPLETED.
- 2015/16: Compose Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for the University's Graduate Division. COMPLETED.
- 2016/17: Bring all departments into compliance with using direct assessment measures. IN PROCESS.
- 2016/17: Universalize graduate studies assessment around the Grad ILOs. IN PROCESS.

Additionally, the University has developed a set of Five Core Competencies in conformity with the 2013 revision of WSCUC's reaccreditation guide. These competencies (Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Quantitative Literacy, Information Literacy and Oral Communication) considerably overlap with CSUN's Fundamental Learning Competencies and serve as the central Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Measures to assess these competencies are ongoing, both through new institution-level assessments and through the activities of the departments, which can elect to assess any of the Big 5 competencies at any time in the cycle. Thus, in 2014/15 and 2015/16, CSUN's Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE), was enhanced in six piloted administrations of a special version to include assessments of Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Quantitative Literacy and Information Literacy. This Spring, WPE will be administered as a near-exit assessment of four core competencies; consistent results to date include a finding that English language learners are performing at significantly lower levels than native English speakers in all four categories.

Special pilot assessments of student writing at entry have revealed a significant difference between the writing proficiency of students enrolled in the two versions of "Stretch" Writing. In response to such findings—and to make certain that institution-level assessments will have effects at the program level—OAAPR is partnering with the College of Humanities in Fall 2016 to inaugurate systematic direct assessment of Stretch Writing in three of the departments that teach it. In 2017/18, this assessment will be scaled up to include Stretch Writing courses in all of the College's offering departments. The Dean of Humanities and the chairs of the departments will be responsible for acting on the results of these assessments and of the WPE assessments. Additionally, Oviatt Library faculty will be working with the OAAPR to address consistently low results on the Information Literacy portion of the enhanced WPE assessments.

While not an issue explicitly noted in the reaccreditation letter, the University recognizes that it must provide direct evidence of student learning with respect to the five core competencies at both the entry and exit (or near-exit) levels. The activities described immediately above were all inaugurated in recognition of this requirement. Additional measures to assess the core competencies at multiple levels are being inaugurated as part of assessing SLOs identified by our General Education program. Departments which have courses in a given GE section will engage

in direct assessment. The plan begins with the Basic Skills section, which consists of Analytical Reading and Expository Writing, Critical Thinking, Mathematics and Oral Communication. (The learning outcomes for Information Competence will be assessed in conjunction with the assessment of Basic Skills.) All sections of our GE program will be assessed in coming years.

One of the activities the University is proudest of is the continuing development of SLO assessment in the co-curricular arena. The Division of Student Affairs continues to prioritize and improve assessment of its programs and services, including the extent to which they demonstrate quality and effectiveness in achieving SLOs. Each Student Affairs department prepares an annual report that details its programs and services in alignment with division priorities. Programs and services are assessed and outcomes reported. A review of annual reports for 2014/2015 shows:

- Of 13 units/departments, six report the implementation of service or program strategies that seek to assist students in achieving a specific student learning outcome;
- A total of 33 individual strategies were assessed by SA departments, of which eight involved direct assessment.

(See Appendix B, “Division of Student Affairs: Continuing Development of Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, September 2016.”)

Refining program review

In its 2012 reaccreditation letter to CSUN, the Commission encourages the “continued development of program review, especially by integrating findings from assessment of student learning into program reviews.” The Commission notes that findings from assessment of student learning should be “one important element of the review.” Because the University agrees with the centrality of assessment to program review, it directed the Office of Academic Assessment and Program Review (OAAPR) to address the issue more fully, which it has done in the intervening years by:

- educating faculty on the central role of assessment within program review;
- putting assessment of student learning on equal footing with strategic planning, the more traditional focus of departmental program review;
- revising the guidelines for preparing self-studies, emphasizing how each must include a section devoted to assessment, formally identified in the table of contents;
- requiring that each self-study provide student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all degrees, include strengths and weaknesses in student achievement as revealed by assessment evidence, provide evidence of action taken to improve the program based on findings and report action taken to improve the assessment process since the previous program review;
- including annual assessment reports in an appendix to the document.

The spotlight on assessment as a major focus of program review has impacted every part of the process, including the Memo of Understanding (MOU) that concludes each review. The MOU is based on the findings of the external reviewers and is divided into commendations and recommendations. At a final meeting, the department, its College and the Provost’s Office amend the MOU as needed and agreement is reached as to its content.

Beginning in late Spring 2014, the MOU format was divided into sub-sections, with one of these identified as assessment. This change assures that assessment is covered in both the commendations and recommendations sections. Perhaps more importantly, the external reviewers are informed of the need to make assessment a focus during their visit to campus and in their final written report.

Program review policy and self-study guidelines are updated frequently. The latest CSUN revision—which includes greater focus on direct assessment of all degrees, graduate and undergraduate alike, as well as certificate programs—was approved in AY 2015/16 by the Faculty Senate. In annual meetings with the chairs of departments that are beginning the cycle, the coordinator of Program Review and the director of the OAAPR present and review new requirements and suggest ways in which they can be achieved. Additionally, particularly well done self-studies are posted on the OAAPR website as “best practices” examples. (See Appendix C, “Current Program Review Procedures and Self-Study Guidelines,” and Appendix D, “Sample Program Review MOUs.”)

Since 2012, 31 departments/programs have completed assessment-enhanced program reviews, each consisting of a self-study, a two-day external review and completion of an MOU that remains in effect for the following six years, until the next review is required. Seven departments/programs are in the midst of their reviews, having completed the self-study segment. Another 10 programs started their self-studies in Fall 2016. Changes in program review and renewed emphasis on assessment have borne fruit. Assessment sections in self-studies reveal more detailed, longer and more comprehensive direct assessment.

As the examples below show, program review—like assessment—is a decentralized process at CSUN, with decisions on what to assess, how to assess and how to apply results varying widely. This decentralization is not accidental and reflects our conviction that the most valuable types of assessments are devised by those charged with doing the assessment and making change based on the results.

Highlights of the assessment sections of completed self-studies reveal:

- Economics (BA) directly assessed three courses via embedded essay exam questions and successfully improved instruction in the program's key concepts in response to student learning deficiencies uncovered;
- Electrical Engineering (MS) applied the same Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) standards in its master's assessments as used in its undergraduate programs, using forums and surveys with constituent groups, including students, faculty, alumni, employers and advisory boards. The results led to course improvement;
- Child and Adolescent Development (BA) conducted both indirect (survey of alumni) and direct (21-item multiple choice quiz based on hypothetical scenarios) assessment, incorporating new material into its curriculum based on identified weaknesses;
- Asian American Studies (BA) used pre- & post-tests to assess its entry-level survey course and began planning for closing the loop by implementing program changes;
- English (BA/MA) conducted direct assessments of program SLOs within a range of English classes and developed a new program option in response;

- Philosophy (BA) directly assessed four junior-level gateway courses and used the results to create new courses and modify existing courses. Pre- and post-test scores on papers were collected longitudinally;
- History (MA/BA) directly assessed student papers with results revealing that students do well in producing research papers--particularly in narrative format--but do less well in analysis and making historical arguments. In response to the results, changes made by faculty include offering study guides, sample in-class exercises, peer presentations and/or submitting outlines/drafts of papers;
- Urban Studies & Planning (BA/MUP) used pre- and post-tests to assess entry-level courses that included both future majors and students taking courses for GE;
- Religious Studies (BA) directly assessed its five SLOs, with results revealing a need for more emphasis on the historical and social background of various religious phenomena. Changes were made to relevant syllabi to include more material in this area;
- Anthropology (BA/MA) found from its assessments that students were not prepared for its capstone course and moved to enforce its prerequisites. Three different introductory courses were assessed using identification of central concepts, with no changes found to be needed. Learning deficiencies were identified in biological anthropology, resulting in the hiring of two faculty in biological anthropology; later assessments showing that student identification of the central concepts had been mastered;
- Political Science (BA/MA) changed its course sequencing, added new courses and improved its student support services in response to its assessments;
- Deaf Studies (BA) assessments found strength in students' ability to cite and explain explicit and implicit forms of oppression, but found weakness in American Sign Language (ASL) communication abilities. A new course was implemented in response;
- Gender & Women's Studies (BA) directly assessed all four of its program SLOs, revealing student weakness in mastering key disciplinary concepts. In response, a content analysis of syllabi for all courses was undertaken to make sure key concepts were included in various courses. Results were also used to re-write the departmental mission statement and SLOs and to develop a new curriculum alignment matrix to show where concepts were introduced, practiced and demonstrated;
- Geography (BA/MA) directly assessed its introductory, gateway and capstone courses, finding an uneven pattern in student learning. More emphasis on the writing of literature reviews and research papers was made in response to this finding. Concern over too many part-time faculty teaching key courses was expressed in the self-study, with the result that instructors now are asked to use a website designed by a tenured professor to teach their courses and a standardized syllabus for such courses has been developed;
- Psychology (BA/MA/Tseng College Master's Degree) conducted direct assessments of its program SLOs. Instructors were informed of the results so that instruction on items students were struggling with could be modified and improved;
- Cinema and Television Arts applied direct assessment results in a key sophomore-level course to changes in the final exam and worked on improving its assessment instruments.

(See Appendix E, "Survey of Assessment Results Reported in Department Program Reviews, 2012-2015.")

The Provost's Office, with help from the director of the OAAPR and the coordinator of Program Review, is responsible for seeing that assessment continues to be a central component of program review. The timeline for accomplishing this goal includes:

- 2012-2016: Education of faculty about the centrality of assessment in program review and the need to apply results for change. CONTINUING.
- 2015/16: Revision of program review self-study guidelines to emphasize importance of assessment in the self-study. COMPLETED.
- 2016/17: Faculty Senate approval of the revised guidelines. COMPLETED.

In addition to cyclical program review in Academic Affairs (every six years for non-accredited academic departments), 15 units within Student Affairs are either undergoing program review this year (2016/17) or will be doing so through 2020/21. (See Appendix F, "Division of Student Affairs Program Review Information, September 2016.")

Continuing improvements in advising

While acknowledging the "many improvements that CSUN has made to advising" in its 2012 reaccreditation letter, the Commission cited the need for "further steps," singling out improved advising in the majors, enforcement of advising policies and enhancements in the training of advisors. CSUN embraced these recommendations: Extensive efforts that had begun well before 2012 continue in all three areas to improve advising across the University, with particular emphasis on student populations that are growing and/or in need of additional/specialized support.

Concurrently with the visiting team report, the University created a new position in the Office of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) to address a number of the advising, policy and training needs outlined in that document. The position of associate director—now director—of UGS was filled by an academic advisor and former director of one of the Student Services Center/Educational Opportunity Programs (SSC/EOP) satellites, a long-time employee with strong connections to our professional advising community. This position has a clear understanding of day-to-day advising needs and serves as a resource to advisors, faculty, administrators and students on policy implementation and interpretation.

The director stays connected to the community of advisors by attending the monthly EOP Advisory Board meetings to share information and receive feedback; communicates with advising areas on campus not affiliated with EOP (which were previously out of the information loop); is actively involved in e-advising initiatives; and serves as liaison to Admissions and Records (A&R) and Information Technology (IT) on policy implementation. The director is actively involved in many of the efforts outlined in this section and frequently serves as the eyes and ears of the associate vice president/UGS in the advising arenas.

As with assessment and program review, advising at CSUN is highly decentralized, traditionally and practically. That is one reason why we reference "a community of advisors" as a key element in advising success and strive to keep it that way. Decentralization reflects a philosophy that says the most valuable type of advising is that selected, devised and delivered by those most familiar with the students being advised. Recent developments include:

Educational Advisory Board Student Success Collaborative Foundation (EAB SSC): CSUN launched the EAB SSC Foundation advising campaigns in Fall 2015. Under the Provost's leadership, the academic colleges and Matador Achievement Center (which serves our student athletes) implemented success campaigns tailored to meet the needs of their unique student populations. The EAB platform assists advisors and faculty in identifying struggling students at critical junctures in their academic journeys, prior to placement on academic probation. Using this tool, campaigns were designed around program-specific performance indicators such as GPA and units completed. (For the first iteration, GPAs ranged from 2.0 to 2.7 and units completed from 24 to 89. A total of 1,072 undergraduates were contacted.) More than 20 advisors, eight advising center directors, six faculty and two associate deans participated by emailing, calling or meeting with students for advising/mentoring sessions. Additional faculty participated in workshops, serving as mentors.

This early identification of students not typically considered at-risk enhanced these collective advising efforts. The campaigns addressed issues hindering student success; encouraged greater use of campus resources and activities; educated students about policies that could impact future enrollment; helped students engage with faculty mentors, professional staff and peers; and explored time/stress management and study skills.

The goals for the 2015/16 campaigns included increasing GPA from the first to second year, increasing retention from the second to third year and increasing student engagement in campus life. Results varied, but initial findings were positive. For example, the College of Health and Human Development (HHD) reported a 91 percent persistence rate among participating students, a 52 percent positive change in GPA and a decrease in concern level among students. Other colleges reported that 54-56 percent of students targeted in their campaigns either maintained or improved their GPAs.

Modification and expansion of advising efforts were undertaken as a result of the initial campaigns:

- tools were developed to help students focus on short-term goals and GPA improvement;
- in order to facilitate follow-up, watch lists were created of students who had not completed critical lower division courses;
- HHD created a faculty mentor training program;
- a network of staff advisors and faculty was tapped to collaborate on current and future campaigns;
- peer advising was expanded, with additional training provided.

A mandatory advising hold was implemented for Spring 2017 registration to address lower-than-desired response rates from targeted students.

In August 2016, CSUN migrated to EAB SSC Campus, an improvement that should allow us to integrate predictive analytics with advising and tutoring management and enhance our ability to support students at key points in their academic programs. Current advising campaigns will continue; new campaigns will be developed. Training of advisors and faculty on the new platform is being expanded, as is increasing the number of faculty mentors. The advising community is identifying ways to maintain contact with students post-campaign and support them as they progress in their majors. Systematic assessment will be developed to measure the impact of these campaigns on retention and academic success.

STAR Act (SB1440): The Fall 2012 implementation of Senate Bill 1440, known as the STAR Act (www.adegreewithaguarantee.com), provided CSUN with an opportunity to improve advising for transfer students. The number of STAR students has grown continuously since the passage of SB1440 (from 393 in Fall 2012 to 1,380 in Fall 2015) as community college pathways emerge and CSUN offers more approved “STAR” majors/options (70 as of Spring 2016). STAR students have an advantage over other transfer students: They are eligible for Fall **or** Spring admission; are guaranteed graduation within completion of 60 units following transfer; receive priority registration; and are required to have regular advising, which is critical to their success. Degree “road maps” specific to STAR majors are available in the *University Catalog*. The Fall 2015 change to a single integrated and more intuitive *Degree Progress Report and Planner* streamlined critical information, providing a more accessible way to review progress toward the degree. This was a benefit to all CSUN students, but particularly helpful in accurately advising SB 1440 students.

Advising in the major: Traditionally, CSUN relied heavily on faculty and department chairs to provide academic advisement to all upper division students. Confidence and competence of faculty advisors varied greatly on degree requirements, academic policy and personal interests. There has been a significant shift in recent years. Some academic colleges added professional staff advisors; others restructured advising in their SSC/EOP satellites to assume that responsibility. Following a model established by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS), other areas—such as the departments of Biology (includes all pre-health professions pathways), Kinesiology and Health Sciences and the entire Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication—hired professional staff advisors who are housed directly within the departments, where they work closely with chairs and faculty. In the David Nazarian College of Business and Economics, a professional staff advisor supports juniors and seniors in select majors.

At least two colleges (HHD and SBS) are assembling teams of faculty using EAB SSC Campus and other data tools to conduct targeted outreach and mentoring at the department level. In October 2016, the University launched MAPworks (<http://skyfactor.com/student-retention-why-it-works/>) and is gathering information from freshmen to create targeted support services across many levels of the University, including in the majors.

The system-wide Graduation Initiative 2025 is discussed more widely later, but one important aspect is the hiring of nine college-based retention/graduation specialists in AY 2016/17. In addition to other responsibilities, these student service professionals will collaborate with faculty advisors and department chairs to improve retention and academic performance for first- and second-year majors.

Veterans: A survey conducted by the recently established Veterans Resource Center (VRC) in Spring 2015 revealed that a significant number of vets were not aware of advising services or academic policy and frequently experienced difficulty in scheduling advising appointments in advance of their priority registration time. (A&R data show that CSUN’s student vet population has grown to over 650 as of February 2016.) The VRC partnered with Undergraduate Studies to offer an “advising dinner” in Fall 2015. College-based advisors held informal sessions with the vets over dinner and the UGS director spoke about academic advising, degree requirements and resolving registration holds.

While the event received overwhelmingly positive feedback, participation was low. It was determined that future events be scheduled earlier in the semester and more aggressively promoted. As a result, twice as many veterans attended the Spring 2016 dinner. In addition, UGS now circulates lists of veterans to appropriate parties well in advance of priority registration so advisors can reach

out and schedule timely advising appointments. Student Affairs contributes to this improved support by offering a dedicated New Student Orientation for vets. A&R developed a veterans' portal to allow for easier submission of documents needed to obtain benefits.

International Students: Prior to Spring 2015, advising and registration of our growing international first-time freshman and transfer student populations were decentralized, a process that worked well for those already in the country but did not provide sufficient support for those still overseas. Many of our international students (2,148 in Fall 2015, 459 of who were new freshmen or new transfers) arrived late and faced major problems. For example, they enrolled in the only available classes left, had to “crash” courses and/or were at-risk of part-time enrollment—which violated their student visas and the requirements of their financial sponsors. College-based advisors were unable to meet the needs of these students at the start of the semester. These conditions created an environment where students skipped prerequisites or dropped courses needed to satisfy University requirements, courting potential dismissal at the end of their first year.

To begin addressing these issues, Undergraduate Studies hired a dedicated academic advisor in October 2014 and centralized advising services for new international (F-1) undergraduates. Two additional advisors and an administrative support assistant have since been added, reporting to the newly-titled director of First Year International Student Advising. Processes were developed to better anticipate who would attend CSUN and which classes they would need. The UGS website (<http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/new-f-1-international-student-academic-advisement-process>) features critical information tailored to this population. Students needing math are enrolled in an online developmental math course and use Assessment and LEarning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS) to practice before taking a proctored math exam upon arriving. Results are used to place them into the appropriate math sequence. Seats in popular GE and lower division major courses are “reserved” so students can be enrolled into a full-time schedule that satisfies degree requirements and academic interests. Advising holds lock these students into their first semester classes.

The team works collaboratively with International Admissions, college-based advisors, associate deans and the International and Exchange Student Center to foster a seamless transition into the University. The UGS director serves as a liaison between A&R and the associate deans to ensure that approved J-1 Chancellor's Office Exchange participants can enroll in the classes they need to satisfy their academic goals.

Educational Opportunity Programs: There have been numerous developments within EOP since 2012. EOP played a major role in establishing the Dream Center (<http://www.csun.edu/csun-eop/csun-dream-project-information>), through which advisement for undocumented students is greatly enhanced. Each SSC/EOP satellite and the Advising Resource Center/EOP (ARC/EOP) for undecided majors has a liaison who collaborates with the Dream Center to provide holistic advisement and timely follow up. The EOP Resilient Scholars Program (<http://www.csun.edu/csun-eop/eop-resilient-scholars-program-rsp>) expands advising and retention services for former foster youth at CSUN.

Another positive change has EOP special admit students receiving support from satellite advisors from time of entry, instead of at the end of their first year, allowing students to establish connections with their college-based advisors and to participate in summer curriculum and activities. All EOP Transitional Programs (Residential Bridge, Commuter Bridge and FreshStart) participants now meet as a large group two-to-three times each semester to foster an even stronger sense of community.

SSC/EOP satellite and ARC/EOP advisors join these meetings to connect with students outside of mandatory EOP advising sessions. Satellite advisors are involved in EOP Transfer Bridge to help support community college students as they transition.

Entering Freshmen: UGS expanded efforts to retain and support First Time Freshmen (FTF) by adding pro-active outreach before and after their first semester rather than waiting until the end of the first year. (A Fall 2015 examination of first-to-second semester persistence rates revealed that nearly half of the students lost at the end of the first year failed to enroll after their first semester.) Effective Fall 2016, welcoming emails are sent to incoming freshmen, highlighting critical resources, including academic advising and tutoring. Advisors are provided lists of eligible freshmen who are not enrolled for their second semester as soon as registration by appointment is over. Advisors contact these students, encouraging them to return and helping them resolve registration issues. Until now, this was done only at the end of the first year.

Advisor Training: A concerted effort is being made to provide our advising community with additional training and professional development opportunities. UGS continues to host biannual advising community meetings to provide updates on academic policies and procedures, systemwide mandates and new initiatives and programs. These gatherings serve as open forums to share concerns about institutional practices and the impact they have on student success. UGS also sponsors and coordinates advising community participation in National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) webinars, such as those on first-generation students, supporting student veterans, redirecting mis-majored students and navigating Title IX. UGS has invested in a small resource library as another way to provide training opportunities for advisors. Increasingly, the colleges provide resources that allow advisors to attend regional and national NACADA conferences where they expand their knowledge of advisement best practices. Through the Terry Piper Lecture Series, sponsored by Student Affairs, and the recent Town Hall Series on the Current Higher Education Environment, sponsored by Academic Affairs, CSUN has increased its efforts to involve faculty, staff and administrators in issues related to diversity and academic success.

Raising undergraduate completion rates

In its 2012 letter, the Commission commended the work the University is doing “to understand, track and support its students,” noting the creative approaches used to improve rates of persistence, graduation and time to degree. In addition to its commendation on improvements and creativity, the Commission asked that CSUN:

- monitor retention and completion rates;
- extend its first-year experience programs to more students;
- continue its focus on addressing the remediation needs of entering students;
- evaluate the effectiveness of its various initiatives;
- refine approaches to support continued improvement.

Student success has been the University’s guiding focus for the last 10 years and will continue to be so for the next 10 as the unmet demand for college graduates in California grows and CSUN moves to better meet its responsibilities. As noted by the 2012 visiting team, we began implementing programs to improve retention and graduation rates under the Chancellor’s Office (CO) 2015 Graduation Initiative, which set the six-year graduation goal at CSUN at 49 percent and a reduced achievement gap of 3.5 percent between better prepared/served and less-well

prepared/served students. By 2015, CSUN surpassed its CO-assigned graduation rate target by one point, but like many other CSU campuses, was unable to sufficiently reduce the achievement gap, which remained stubbornly high.

Retention and Graduation: Data collected for this mid-cycle review show an undergraduate enrollment just exceeding 30,500 FTES in Fall 2016 and a total headcount enrollment of just under 40,000, a drop of 4 percent when compared to CSUN's total enrollment in Fall 2015. However, our retention and graduation story involves more than rapid growth in overall enrollment. The composition of the First Time Freshman (FTF) and First Time Transfer (FTT) cohorts entering during the last decade has changed as well.

The proportion of freshmen from traditionally underserved backgrounds increased from 51 percent in Fall 2002 to 70 percent by Fall 2014. Similarly, the proportion of Pell Grant recipients (a proxy for low-income status) grew from 42 percent in Fall 2007 to the mid-sixties in the 2011-2014 period. Much of this change was fueled by a sharp rise in the number of Latina/o entering freshmen, who accounted for three-fifths of FTF in Fall 2014. Throughout the period, racial/ethnic background and Pell Grant status were closely linked, with students from traditionally underserved backgrounds more likely to be Pell Grant recipients than those better served (60-74 percent Pell vs. 30-45 percent). Shifts in the education of parents of entering freshmen mirror these changes: The proportion of FTF who report that both their parents have no more than a high school education grew from 29 percent in Fall 2002 to 51 percent in Fall 2014, figures which suggest that the majority of CSUN's incoming freshmen are first-generation college students. A similar pattern is evident for newly enrolled transfer students during the time span examined, albeit with more modest increases in Latina/o students, Pell Grant recipients and students whose parents have no more than a high school education.

Despite these changes in the characteristics of entering classes and the increasing numbers of students admitted annually, one-year retention rates for freshman and transfer cohorts stayed the same or improved slightly over the same period. FTF continued to perform relatively well during their first year of college, with close to nine-tenths of each cohort attempting a full-load (12-15 units) during the first semester and close to three-quarters ending their first year in good academic standing. Average GPAs at the end of the first year were between 2.50 and 2.70 across the years. The same pattern is seen among transfer students' academic performance during their first year, with little difference in performance, despite the just-described shift in composition of recent entering classes. Thus, 60-70 percent of incoming transfers attempted a full load during their first semester and 81-87 percent ended their first year in good academic standing. Average CSUN GPAs generally ranged from 2.80 to 2.90.

The six-year graduation rate for entering freshmen during the Fall 2007-2009 period grew from 45 percent to 50 percent, while the underserved/better served gap decreased from 14 percent to 11 percent, a result of the early incarnation of the "graduation-specialist" approach, described later. Even more dramatically, overall six-year graduation rates rose from 40 percent for the Fall 2002 freshman cohort to 50 percent for the Fall 2009 cohort, a gain of one-fourth. Additionally, likely graduates (those who graduated in the set time periods of three and six years or were still enrolled at the University and therefore expected to graduate) grew, with a modest increase from

51 to 58 percent. And while the six-year graduation rates of traditionally underserved students lagged those of better-served students throughout the period, their graduation rate certainly grew, from 35 percent for the Fall 2002 cohort to 45 percent for the Fall 2009 cohort. Such gains are noteworthy, given the consistent growth in freshman numbers and the gaps in pre-college preparation. (See Appendix G, “Six-Year Graduation Rates of First-Time Freshman Entrants by Racial and Ethnic Background and Fall Entry Term.”)

While the CO’s 2015 targets were established only for freshmen, CSUN also saw improvement in the three-year graduation rates of transfer students. Between Fall 2005 and Fall 2012, graduation rates for better-served upper division transfers rose a modest 4 percent, from 60 percent for those entering in 2005 to 64 percent for those entering in 2012. However, graduation rates for traditionally underserved transfer students rose from 51 percent to 62 percent, a growth of 11 percent over that time period. (See Appendix H, “Three-Year Graduation Rates of Upper Division Transfer Entrants by Racial and Ethnic Background and Fall Entry Term.” For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Appendix I, “Recent Trends in Undergraduate Persistence at Cal State Northridge: The Progress of Fall 2002-14 Entrants.”)

Continue focus on addressing the remediation needs of entering students; extend first-year experience programs to more students: So many of our entering freshmen are enrolled in developmental coursework in their first year that it makes sense to discuss remediation needs and first-year experience programs together.

In 2012, as we were being reaccredited, the California State University (CSU) implemented a system-wide program of remediation, called Early Start, initially for all underprepared students in mathematics and a portion of underprepared students in writing. Under this initiative, students who test below GE level in either/both CSU placement exams are required to participate in either an online or on-campus summer experience in writing/math in order to attend CSUN the following Fall. Early Start results here have been quite positive: of the FTF entering CSUN during the 2012-14 period, 3,109 participated in Early Start Writing and 4,914 participated in Early Start Mathematics. The one-year continuation rate for these three cohorts rose from 74 percent for Fall 2011 entrants to 78 percent for Fall 2014 entrants. The results are particularly good in math, where students make genuine progress towards completing required remediation. Data show a correlation between participation and first-year persistence, although a causal relationship has not been established. Still, gains are seen across the board when high school GPA is held constant.

The University also is expanding ExCEL (Experiencing Confidence and Enjoyment of Learning), a social-emotional and mindset intervention program which shows marked success in closing the achievement gap for students in the lowest level of developmental math. Its use is being expanded to STEM developmental math sections, as well as in the new “stretch” math program (below) and in high DFU classes.

Early Start Math, ExCEL and existing courses in developmental math have been very successful in moving students to GE readiness more quickly. However, some students still start their first semester in pre-baccalaureate classes. For those students, CSUN is developing “stretch” versions of required math courses in the humanities, arts and social sciences. These will build on the

already successful stretch writing model, which combines remedial and GE coursework into a single year-long sequence for which students earn college credit. Also in early stages is the “Success Skills Modules” plan through which faculty from various disciplines will develop a reading skills module to help students in stretch writing learn how to approach different kinds of texts. Faculty also will develop workshops on learning how to learn and seeking help.

CSUN’s primary first-year experience, UNIV100: The Freshman Seminar, has had modest growth in numbers over the years, expanding from an early focus on those students considered most in need of this “introduction to doing college” to becoming part of a number of initiatives, including “GE Honors at Entrance” and the “Freshman Connection.” Its success has led to versions of the course being offered by colleges geared to their students, such as SCI 100 in the College of Science and Mathematics. Our Freshman Common Reading Program continues to thrive in its tenth year, with the speaker at the Fall Freshman Convocation connected to the book, most often its author. (See Appendix J, “Enrollment in UNIV100 by Term.”)

Among the biggest changes are those occurring as a result of Matador Momentum, CSUN’s effort to “Re-imagine the First Year of College” as part of AASCU:

<http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/academic-first-year-experiences/matador-momentum-re-imagining-first-year>. Work is highly collaborative, involving Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Information Technology and Associated Students. As part of this national initiative, we import/replicate/copy best practices, as well as create new ones of our own:

- “undecided” majors are now “exploratory” majors to give these students agency and a more active role in moving toward declaring a major;
- a new “pagelet” in the student portal will provide one-stop shopping for all on-campus jobs, a vast improvement over the multitude of websites a student currently has to visit to gather information;
- new peer mentoring, using New Student Orientation “O-Leaders” will work with 200 selected FTF, starting in Spring 2017.

See Appendix K, “Progress Report on Matador Momentum.”

Evaluate the effectiveness of various initiatives; refine approaches to support continued improvement: The mission of the newly-established (June 2016) Office of Student Success Innovations (OSSI) is to close opportunity gaps—persistent disparities in student success rates among different groups of students—by engaging and empowering faculty, staff and students to collaborate in developing innovations that increase educational equity and student success. In the four months since its creation, OSSI has served as a clearinghouse of “all things student success” by bringing together CSUN’s existing assets and working to coordinate them. This coordination is a major focus, and one of OSSI’s first chores was to create an inventory of efforts aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates and closing the opportunity gap. The inventory will both serve as a resource and help OSSI assess impact in order to scale up effective programs/services and sunset those that are less impactful. OSSI also sponsors a monthly Town Hall Series on the Higher Education Environment to share ideas on how to address issues collectively and collaboratively. OSSI works with the Office of Institutional Research to move

data into the hands of users and works closely with Faculty Development and the Faculty Technology Center to create/support programing that addresses the opportunity gap, retention and graduation.

Since the 2012 reaccreditation visit, some changes have been made in the plethora of initiatives, programs and processes CSUN uses to support student success, from the time they arrive on campus until they graduate. By-and-large, however, initiatives have been removed only when replaced by a different process with similar intent. Most of what we have been doing is refining existing processes and, where possible, extending their reach. (See Appendix L, “Student Success, Retention and Graduation, Updated and Annotated List 2016.”)

The Future: In summer 2016, the CSU launched Graduation Initiative 2025, setting expectations for the next nine years of retention and graduation activities systemwide and establishing targets for each campus, including CSUN:

Metric	2025 Goal	Most Recent Rate
Freshman 6-Year Graduation	66%	50%
Freshman 4-Year Graduation	30%	13%
Transfer 2-Year Graduation	43%	31%
Transfer 4-Year Graduation	81%	71%
Gap - Underrepresented Minority	0	11 % points
Gap – Pell	0	8 % points

In doing this, the CSU reaffirmed student success as its top priority, as measured by graduation rates. GI 2025 raises the six-year system-wide graduation rate to 60 percent (four-year rate 30 percent) while eliminating the achievement gaps for underrepresented and Pell-eligible students.

These targets are aggressive but we believe both attainable and necessary. CSUN will improve its rates while maintaining appropriate academic standards and honoring its tradition of access.

We will continue to serve as many students as possible in Los Angeles and surrounding regions. We want to stay true to the core of a broad-based liberal arts education and to innovative approaches to education.

CSUN's plan features coordinated efforts concentrated initially in three major areas: enrollment management, advising and data capability expansion. Long-term planning will include retention innovations for FTF. (See Appendix M, "CSUN Students Rise: CSU Graduation Initiative 2025.")

Short-term activities (2016-2017) focus primarily on moving students who are on target to graduate in 4.5 years (FTF) or 2.5 years (FTT) to finish one semester earlier, by Spring or Summer 2017. The University has targeted approximately 1,200 students (400 FTF from the Fall 2013 cohort and 800 FTT from the Fall 2015 cohort). Strategies to accelerate progress toward graduation include:

- **Schedule Augmentation:** CSUN added sections of high-demand major classes for juniors and seniors to the Fall/Spring schedules. Administrators will use newly available degree progress and milestone data to identify bottlenecks sooner and aggressively adjust schedules to meet demand.
- **Completion Grants:** CSUN is identifying upper division students who are on track to graduate in 4.5/5 years (FTF) and 2.5/3 years (FTT) and will contact them to ascertain how best to facilitate their graduation. Using predetermined criteria, some students will be offered completion grants to help. (Based on historical trends, 7 percent of entering FTF classes graduate in 4.5 years and 14 percent of FTT graduate in 2.5 years.)

In a change from the past several years of restricting unit loads, CSUN is allowing students to enroll in up to 16 units during the initial registration period.

Long-term efforts focus on increasing retention of incoming classes and committing to a more four-year (and two-year) focused experience:

- Enrollment Management strategies include the addition of course sections, identification of bottlenecks and building of data-driven and student-centered class schedules.
- Developing campus culture in which students expect to enroll in 15 or more units per term (30 units a year), especially in their freshman and sophomore years. An advertising campaign will encourage students to take 15-unit loads ("15 to Finish"); advisors will focus on 15 units as the default.
- Increasing the number of tenure-track and tenured faculty teaching lower division GE and major courses.
- Continuing improvements in advising (discussed previously), including more data-driven processes and new graduation/retention specialists.
- Increasing academic support for students in need of additional help.
- Expanding data capabilities to improve graduation rates and eliminate achievement gaps.

Colleges will reevaluate graduation plans for freshmen and transfers and engage faculty in streamlining curriculum and updating course materials and methods of delivery in order to

increase course completion while maintaining academic rigor, a commitment to equity and inclusive excellence. (See Appendix N, “GI2025Timeline for 2016/17.”)

Addressing ongoing State funding challenges

While expressing pleasure with CSUN’s “proactive handling of the reduction in state support” in its letter, the Commission urged the University toward “continued diligence in anticipating and planning for changes in the level of state support.” The Commission expressed special concern about “the potential consequences of recently proposed education funding reductions on educational programs and student learning, and the ability of campuses to sustain academic quality and effectiveness.” The team visit and reaccreditation came during the “worst of the worst” moments (so far) in decreased state support for higher education, in California and the nation. While the financial picture has improved since then, CSUN continues to be proactive and diligent in making every dollar count—while working to add new ones from sources other than State coffers.

Background: The General Fund appropriation to CSUN decreased annually beginning in 2008/09 and continuing until 2013/14 when the State allocated new base funds to the CSU system with the passage of Prop. 30. This legislation provided 5 percent increases to the CSU in 2013/14 and 2014/15, and a 4 percent increase in 2015/16, with the proviso that the system not increase tuition fees. However, such increases represented roughly half of our revenue (i.e., a 5 percent State appropriation increase equates to about a 2.5 percent increase in total operating revenue) since tuition fees remained the same. Even with these increases, CSUN’s General Fund appropriation in 2015/16 (\$166.6 million) falls far short of its funding in 2007/08 (\$195.4 million), the fiscal year prior to the budget cuts.

<i>Cal State University, Northridge</i>	
<i>General Fund Operating Budget Analysis</i>	
<i>Fiscal Years 2006/07 - 2015/16</i>	
	General Fund
Fiscal Year	Appropriation*
2006-07	\$ 180,010,350
2007-08	\$ 195,369,280
2008-09	\$ 194,191,936
2009-10	\$ 148,718,316
2010-11	\$ 166,726,076
2011-12	\$ 131,345,346
2012-13	\$ 123,002,396
2013-14	\$ 141,659,296
2014-15	\$ 154,242,396
2015-16	\$ 166,615,096
*Source: CSU Coded Budget Memo	

Guiding Principles: The University maintains a consistent, proactive approach in addressing the challenges of State funding. In support of this approach, CSUN actively collaborates with the CO in developing short- and long-term strategies to position the campus and system for a future less dependent on State money. This collaboration is evidenced by the now-retired Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs serving on the 2014 task force that developed a system-wide, sustainable financial plan for future budget allocation, revenue generation, enrollment management and institutional financial aid policies.

CSUN adopted this resource as a [Financial Model to Support the Future of The California State University](#); it serves as a guiding principle in support of our [planning priorities](#). These priorities are the impetus for implementing actionable strategies with direct impact on student success—the University’s number one priority. In addition to the Financial Model, CSUN aligns its budget planning with several priorities, communicated broadly among campus partners, stakeholders and constituents. For example, the CSUN Sustainability Plan, Institutional Technology Vision Report and the CSUN Master Plan all provide strategic plans.

CSUN also works collaboratively with the CO in using State resources efficiently, including actively pursuing strategic sourcing opportunities. The University participates in the system’s strategic sourcing and procurement vision, a cooperative effort by the CSU, the University of California and the California Community Colleges.

Collaborative Governance Structure: The setting of strategic initiatives, planning priorities, implementation and communication of goals is the collaborative work of campus committees, whose meeting minutes provide evidence of ongoing engagement and improvement. These University-wide committees have diverse campus makeup, including faculty, students, staff and administrators from the five divisions. For example, The University Planning and Budget Group (UPBG) serves in an advisory capacity to the President by assisting with the development and prioritization of campus goals and advising on the allocation of resources. In addition, the campus’ information technology governance structure provides a collaborative framework for making the most of resources for University-wide technology services and spending. The Educational Resources Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, annually examines the resource implications of the budget, faculty hiring and enrollment.

Implementation of Strategies: Our strategic planning addresses the need to set priorities to offset reduced State appropriations and mitigate the adverse impact on student access and success. These strategies have long-term impacts on the ability to improve graduation rates and grow alternative sources of revenue while maintaining conservative financial stewardship. CSUN has been able to document achievements and the impact of these goals, which demonstrate the continued diligence in planning for changes in the level of State support. Achievements and plans include:

- CSUN received \$19.6 million in total new gift commitments in 2015/16 and saw continued increase in the total number of donors, including undergraduate alumni donors;
- Major capital projects, such as the proposed on-campus hotel in partnership with an established business-class hotel brand. The project will not only bring in funds but will support the events and programs that connect the University with students and their families, alumni and the academic and business communities. This project underlines our innovative approaches to targeting other financial resources and seizing opportunities with a growing number of public-private partnerships (P3s);

- The newly constructed Extended University Commons building positions the Tseng College of Extended Learning (TEXL) to expand its “self-support degree, certificate, and professional development programs and leverage these funds to support university priorities.” Although TEXL runs self-support programs and classes, it funded and constructed classroom space made available for state-supported instruction during the day;
- Through its partnership with The University Corporation (TUC), a campus auxiliary, the University purchased and renovated a building on Reseda Boulevard to house its Alumni Relations office, the multidisciplinary Center for Assessment, Research and Evaluation (CARE), and CSUN’s L.A. Cleantech Incubator.

TUC and the North Campus Development Corporation (NCDC) continue to contribute financially. In 2015/16, the financial contributions totaled \$2.1 million and were used to fund athletic scholarships and a bleacher project in the basketball arena, among others. TUC’s revenue-generating activities include campus facilities rental, the campus bookstore partnership with a commercial vendor and campus food services. The University systematically pursues opportunities to generate revenue such as cell site and educational broadband service leases. It examines various vendor rebate programs, such as contracting with a multimedia rights partner to increase corporate sponsorships, the revenue from which helps defray operational and student athlete scholarship costs.

Philanthropic support and the capacity to attract it have increased significantly over the last five years. As part of this effort, the University launched a collaboratively developed brand platform that is helping to tell the compelling CSUN story in a coordinated way to external audiences. Twenty new positions have been added in University Advancement and major/principal gift management has been overhauled, with a resultant increase in productivity.

Investments in development and alumni relations activities also are showing strong returns. Total new gift commitments for each of the last three fiscal years have been above \$19.5 million, compared to an average of \$12.3 million for the three prior years. The number of **all** donors has grown from under 7,000 five years ago to over 16,000 last fiscal year while the number of **alumni** donors grew from 2,596 to 9,837 over the same five-year period. Appendix O, “Increased Philanthropic Productivity, 2010-2016” illustrates the positive direction of philanthropic support.

Perhaps one of the greatest changes in financial support for the University is seen in the increase in funds that come directly from faculty and student engagement in research and the significant efforts made to support and increase research-related activities. Of course, some of these funds began coming to CSUN long before our 2012 reaccreditation. For example, since 1994, the University has received more than \$19 million for the NIH Minority Undergraduate Research Training-Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC), Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) and Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS) programs. (CSUN’s MARC students have an 89-90 percent success rate in Ph.D. programs.) More recent grants include:

- an NIH Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) grant of \$21.8 million (September 2014) to involve faculty and underrepresented students in high quality health disparities research. BUILD will increase research opportunities for 300 underrepresented students, support faculty research-readiness, and institutionalize a Health and Health Disparities Research Center;
- a \$1.9 million USDE grant Promoting Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (October 2014) to add research training in the development of a more diverse healthcare workforce;

- a \$2.4 million USDE Title V grant, “Bridging the Gap: Enhancing AIMS2 for Student Success,” an October 2016 renewal of a very successful \$5.4 million grant that ran from Oct. 2011 to Sept. 2016.

Overall, external funding from contract and grants has increased by 13 percent, from \$28.4 million in 2011/12 to \$32.1 million in 2015/16.

External funding serves a number of purposes. It validates the work undertaken by faculty and students; provides financial support for students, for research and for community stewardship activities; and prepares students for further study in graduate programs. It helps provide the funds (no longer provided by the State) to meet increased demands for positive educational outcomes.

The University actively pursues ways to reduce costs, such as bulk purchasing of computers (discount pricing) and using paperless processes internally. CSUN implements sustainability measures that not only lessen the impact on the environment but reduce costs. Through efforts such as turf removal and drought-tolerant landscaping, hydrogel turf treatment and upgrading existing irrigation systems, the University has saved over 27 million gallons of water annually, equating to just over \$48,000 in savings. The existing solar arrays generate over 790,000 kWh annually, saving us over \$100,000 in electricity costs.

Future Plans: Moving forward, the University will continue to align the recommendations of the 2014 CSU Task Force for a Sustainable Financial Model with its planning priorities. For example, CSUN is constructing a 10,000 sq. ft. research building that will position faculty to increase funded research. We are collaborating with two other CSU campuses in the purchase of budgeting and planning software that will serve both as a budgeting/reporting tool and as an effective tool in position management and tuition fee revenue projection and modeling.

Identification of other changes and issues currently facing the University

Instructions: This brief section should identify any other significant changes that have occurred or issues that have arisen at the institution (e.g., changes in key personnel, addition of major new programs, modifications in the governance structure, unanticipated challenges, or significant financial results) that are not otherwise described in the preceding section. This information will help the Interim Report Committee panel gain a clearer sense of the current status of the institution and understand the context in which the actions of the institution discussed in the previous section have taken place.

As can be seen in the preceding sections, CSUN has changed considerably in the five years since the team visit and reaccreditation: Having improved our retention and graduation rates, we now have new, more difficult goals set by the Chancellor’s Office for 2025; the State has improved its support of the CSU and while we are nowhere near the funding levels of the past, we are not in as dire circumstances; the composition of the student body is far different; and having topped out at over 40,000 students in Academic Year 2015/16, we now have enrollment controls to better serve the students who are admitted. CSUN now uses CSU-approved approaches to reduce incoming enrollment—restricting access to certain majors, limiting the number of students from out of the area, changing what is considered “local” to the campus—for the Fall 2016 entering freshmen and transfer classes. The overall goal is to bring enrollment gradually closer to state-

funded targets over a number of years. We were successful at reducing the overall enrollment by 3 percent by reducing the incoming Fall 2016 class size. In future years, the University will try to maintain the size of the entering class at 2016 levels.

Other major changes since our reaccreditation include:

- Both President Dianne F. Harrison (2012) and Provost Yi Li (2015) are new.
- A number of other ranking administrators are new in the last five years, including the vice presidents of University Advancement, Finance and Administration and several academic deans.
- In 2015, CSUN committed to hiring a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), an Extended Cabinet level position that reports directly to President Harrison. The CDO hired in April 2016 is tasked with developing plans and implementing collaborative programs that educate and encourage the campus to adopt diversity, equity, inclusion, educational and employment opportunity and cross-cultural proficiency as core values. The CDO also leads our newly established Commission on Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives.
- A new Athletic Director was hired who has increased fundraising by 500 percent.
- In 2016, President Harrison and Provost Li reaffirmed the University's commitment to student success as the top campus priority by creating a new position, associate vice president for student success. The new position will report to the provost with a dotted line to the vice president/Student Affairs. S/he will serve on the Extended Cabinet and as the primary academic officer for innovation and creation of student success initiatives.
- In collaboration with AASCU, the University is committed to being a steward of place for our region and beyond. We will seek classification as a Carnegie Community Campus in 2019, and we are a signatory of the Campus Compact for Civic Action (<http://compact.org/campus-civic-action-plans-home/>). We have been on the President's Honor Roll or Honor Roll with Distinction for our service learning programs every year since our last reaccreditation.
- Faculty salaries have begun to rise, making it easier to attract new tenure-track faculty of quality. The picture has improved since 2012, with 325 new tenure-track faculty hired in the last five years, including increases in the number of underrepresented faculty.
- In 2013, the University launched the myCSUNtablet initiative, a one-to-one tablet deployment with the goals of increasing student learning and engagement, improving the quality of teaching materials and decreasing cost. The first tablet classes were taught in Fall 2013 and by Spring 2015, more than 120 instructors were teaching tablet classes in eight departments and enrollment has reached 8,279. In January 2015, myCSUNtablet was recognized as an [Apple Distinguished Program](#).
- CSUN has won two national awards for its leadership and comprehensive efforts in sustainability.

Concluding Statement

Instructions: Reflect on how the institutional responses to the issues raised by the Commission have had an impact upon the institution, including future steps to be taken.

Institutional responses to the five issues raised by the Commission have been extensive and productive, helping CSUN to gain an even greater positive trajectory into the future, particularly

as it relates to student success (student learning, retention and completion). These efforts will be sustained into 2025 and beyond. Our financial situation has greatly improved, yet we will continue to seek and leverage revenue sources other than State funding. In the future, we will continue to engage in data-based continuous improvement related to SLOs, program review, advising and undergraduate completion rates. The University is proud of its accomplishments in these areas and appreciates the opportunity to report our progress.