

California State University, Northridge
Division of Student Affairs

Planning Model Concept Explanations

University Mission

The University mission states the purpose for which the University exists and, therefore, is the seminal document from which all planning must originate.

California State University, Northridge exists to enable students to realize their educational goals. The University's first priority is to promote the welfare and intellectual progress of students. To fulfill this mission, we design programs and activities to help students develop the academic competencies, professional skills, critical and creative abilities, and ethical values of learned persons who live in a democratic society, an interdependent world, and a technological age; we seek to foster a rigorous and contemporary understanding of the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines, and we believe in the following values:

1. Commitment to teaching, scholarship, and active learning.
2. Commitment to excellence.
3. Respect for all people.
4. Alliances with the community.
5. Encouragement of innovation, experimentation, and creativity.

Learning Centered University (LCU)

The term Learning Centered University has emerged from a philosophical and paradigmatic debate occurring primarily in academic circles and focused on whether universities exist primarily as places of teaching (with the requisite focus on the teacher) or primarily as places of learning (with the requisite focus on the learner). It is a debate about the cultural context the surrounds, permeates, and shapes our work. President Koester's commitment to becoming a more learning centered university is a way to state that we, as a university, will put more emphasis on the learner and the achievement of learning outcomes. Another way to state this is that the **LCU culture represents an abiding commitment along with the requisite action to facilitate student learning and achievement.** Student learning and achievement transcends the concept of student success in that it places priority on what students learn and how learning is facilitated. Therefore, success becomes defined through the achievement of learning outcomes as well as the more traditional definitions of academic achievement – GPA, graduation, retention, etc.

The Learning Centered University is context through which the University Mission and values are manifested.

Presidential Priorities and Planning Principles

In her first convocation address in August 2000, President Koester identified four priorities:

- Increase graduation rates and reduce time to degree.
- Consistently improve the amount of contributed funds the campus raises.
- Become a user-friendly campus.
- Continue to strengthen the connection between the University and the community, as well as relationships within the campus community.

She has maintained these priorities in each of her subsequent convocation speeches and subsequently added a fifth priority:

- Be an effective organization known for team collaboration.

In 2007 five Principles for Planning were established:

- Academic Excellence*
 - Student Engagement
 - Resource Enhancement
 - User-Friendly Business Practices
 - Campus and Community Collaboration
- *Academic is used in this context to refer to all curricular and co-curricular elements of the University as well as those in support of institutional functioning.

The President's call for the campus to become a more learning centered university does not replace her priorities nor do the priorities define the LCU. The priorities are areas of emphasis through which the LCU is manifested.

Division Strategic Priorities and Annual Objectives

Division planning is responsive to the President's Priorities and Planning Principles through the development of long-term strategic priorities (3-5 years) and annual objectives. Long-term priorities are established by the Vice President of Student Affairs in consultation with the Student Affairs Leadership Team and are informed by the division mission, university expectations, and external influences. Long-term strategic priorities are revised annually. Annual objectives are established through the Student Affairs Management Council. They evolve from departmental planning and are influenced by emerging needs, expectations, and opportunities.

Departmental Goals and Objectives

Departmental planning is guided by its unique mission and the Division strategic priorities and incorporates appropriate professional standards, accreditation requirements, and identified emerging needs, expectations, and opportunities. Department goal statements express the long-term direction and expected achievements of the department. Department objectives within each goal identify the annual initiatives to be achieved in support of department goal accomplishment.

Department goals and objectives inform the development of Division strategic priorities and annual objectives.

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