

## CSUN WSCUC REAFFIRMATION BRIEF AND INSTITUTIONAL REPORT SUMMARY (9/2/21)

CSUN was [last reaccredited in 2012](#). Currently, we are moving through the condensed Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) process, which allows eligible institutions to demonstrate compliance with all [WSCUC Standards](#) through a self-study that focuses on key themes chosen by the institution. Our themes leverage the work we are doing in Student Success, and include 1) Student Achievement, 2) Student Engagement and 3) Student Support.

Taken together, these themes align with, and expand on, existing campus-wide initiatives to raise retention and graduation rates, and build on emerging efforts to eliminate long-standing equity gaps. The themes illustrate CSUN's commitments to key WSCUC Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs) across all standards, but in particular with a focus on demonstrating Institutional Purpose (CSUN's unique mission), excelling in Student Learning and Success as a key framework of everything we do, Organizational Structure and Decision-Making Processes that are driven by evidence and align with our drive for success of our students across all demographic sectors, and a heavy emphasis on Institutional Learning and Continual Improvement.

### 2012 Review Findings & Responses

#### Improve Assessment of Student Learning

- Assessment process was not consistently linked to direct measures of student learning; course learning outcomes were not linked to program or university learning outcomes/competencies.
  - Response: Aligned strategic decisions, including faculty recruitment, to evidence derived from direct assessment which brought meaningful assessment data into the key areas of department, college, and university decision making (e.g., "closing the loop").

#### Refine Program Review

- Program Review was a somewhat unstructured process that allowed/encouraged departments/programs to highlight their successes without authentically engaging shortcomings or strategically articulating a pathway to continual improvement;
  - Response: Revised the Program Review process to follow a succinct template that better aligns the self-study with core elements of accreditation including: meaning and quality of degree; student support services; tenure density and faculty/staff alignment with program outcome goals; Culture and climate of department; program governance; resource sustainability (financial and academic).

#### Continue Improving Advising

- Advising was structured as a college-satellite model and had not evolved for many years, leaving several best practices unutilized.
  - Response: In 2018 the university created the Matador Advising Hub to serve Freshman level students. This responded to the confusion that many new students experienced both in locating the advisor and in the inconsistency of advisement across the colleges. Drawing on the success of EOP and other cohort-specific models, the Hub provides a Freshman-specific experience. Ongoing improvements include further development of a "hub and spoke" advisement structure that includes an improved warm hand-off between advising units, and from GE to major to career.

#### Raise Undergraduate Completion Rates

- Undergraduate graduation rates have been historically low.
  - Consistent with our efforts around GI 2025, CSUN has improved both 4 and 6 year graduation rates and we are making meaningful progress toward our GI 2025 goals.

### Plan More Strategically Around State Funding Challenges

- Campus budgeting has historically failed to plan for California's infamous feast/ famine cycles; following the 2008-9 recession it was clear that this was no longer viable.
  - Campus budget managers adopted a strategic budget model that included building a campus reserve and enhancing non-state revenue streams. The resulting campus reserves were instrumental in allowing the campus to navigate the early stages of the COVID induced budget pressure.

### Reflections on Lessons Learned

The current institutional self-reflection and report, coinciding with the arrival of new top administrative leadership, documents CSUN's progress in the areas identified, and has resulted in an ongoing exploration of the challenges of nurturing an equitable and inclusive student-centric university that ascribes meaning and substantive actions to its social and racial justice endeavors. The resulting journey has reinforced the University's ongoing commitment to student success – in fostering achievements in learning and career preparation, cultivating engagement in curricular and co-curricular High Impact Practices and in how faculty and staff prioritize and support students outside of the classroom in everything from basic needs and housing to financial assistance and mentorships. Our students report that they value their CSUN education, many calling their experiences “transformational.” Our students tell us that they want to focus on learning *and* to graduate in a timely manner. Several GI 2025 initiatives, such as the successful “15 to Finish” credit momentum project detailed in the Institutional Report, have contributed to notable improvements in retention and graduation.

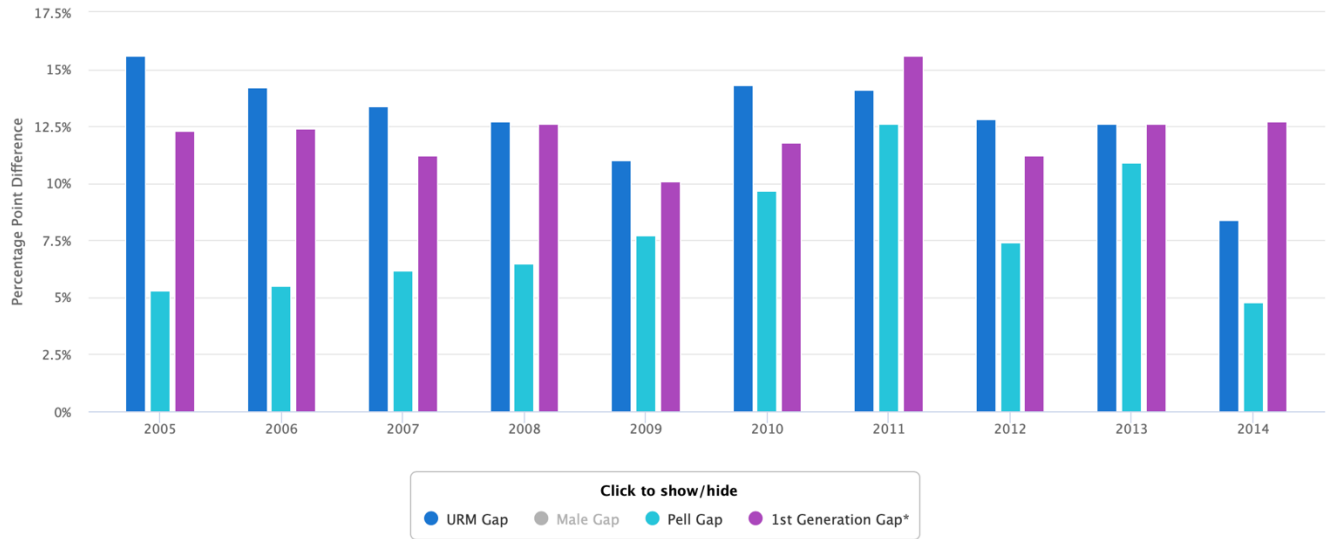
The focus on advancing student success mobilized the campus to generate several programs and initiatives that have substantially improved retention and graduation rates, and have started reducing persistent equity gaps. The campus has made headway in improving advising, sharpening learning outcomes assessment and program review, and has taken several steps to proactively manage its financial resources and meet the challenges of reduced state funding and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Planning for What Comes Next

Building on our progress over the review period, the University has identified a series of intertwined strategies to further enrich and deepen student success:

- Assess and strengthen equity and inclusion efforts, and accelerate our institutional strategy for further improving retention and eliminating equity gaps for all students and employees.
- Elevate persistence and completion rates by enhancing successful strategies, including improving advising structures and further expanding student support services.
- Promote data-driven decision-making in all areas by amplifying existing efforts to gather, analyze and effectively utilize evidence-based results in addressing a range of issues. (Predictive analytics in conjunction with student support services can be helpful to better recognize academic and non-academic risk factors.)
- Continue removing administrative barriers for students by reviewing policies through an equity lens.
- Foster faculty and staff use of technology to take advantage of what works well in a virtual mode (e.g., expanded and improved online student services) while learning the lessons of what didn't work well during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency (e.g., streaming lecture capture).
- Reinforce student engagement and well-being through strengthening cultural identity centers, further developing infrastructure to meet students' basic needs and expand social integration through expanded peer mentoring and augmenting mental health counseling services.

## 6 Year Graduation Equity Gaps:



\*The "1st Generation Gap" is defined as the difference in persistence or graduation rates of students who reported that at least one parent graduated with a bachelor's degree or higher and students who reported that neither parent attended any college. It excludes students who reported that their parents attended college (and did not graduate) as well as students whose parent's education is unknown.

