1. INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTITUTIONAL REPORT: INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT; RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS

Institutional Context (CFRs 1.1, 1.8, 2.1-2.6, 2.8, 3.1, 3.5, 3.8, 4.6)

Background and History.

California State University, Fresno ("Fresno State") has been in existence for over 100 years—first as a teacher's college—Fresno State Normal School (1911) and Fresno State Teachers College (1921), then a comprehensive four year degree granting institution—Fresno State College (1934), and since 1961, a campus of the California State University (CSU) System—acquiring its current name in 1972. The campus confers baccalaureate, masters and professional doctoral degrees, and has the strength of the 23 campus CSU system backing it.

Fresno State is located in the center of California's San Joaquin Valley and is dedicated by the CSU Trustees to be a regional university. As the sole major comprehensive university in a 17,000-plus square mile service area, Fresno State plays a critical role in making higher education available to its students, particularly those who have traditionally been underserved. Fresno State is a U.S. Department of Education designated Minority-Serving Institution in two categories: Hispanic-Serving Institution and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution. The University serves the City of Fresno, the fifth largest metropolitan area of California, as well as the vast and dominantly rural and agricultural counties of the Central Valley, making Fresno State's service area socially-complex.

The character of Fresno State has changed considerably over the campus's 113-year history, moving from a small teaching college to a large comprehensive university. In the 1970s Fresno State invested in its intercollegiate athletic programs and expanded its sports facilities through the growth of the Bulldog Foundation. In the mid-1980s and continuing through the

1990s, the University established research and outreach centers across campus that began the transformation of faculty from that of teachers to one of teacher/scholars. The model of teacher/ scholar is now firmly established with research expectations for faculty clearly defined in the retention, tenure, and promotion process. In the mid-1990s then-President Welty actively pursued an agenda of civic engagement through service-learning courses and community volunteering, resulting in the establishment of the Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning—the only endowed center of its kind in the CSU. Fresno State also became one of the first 76 colleges and universities to be awarded the Carnegie Foundation's "Community Engagement" classification. In the mid-2000s the University recognized the shift in public higher education funding and moved to increase private support, undertaking the largest fundraising effort in its history and raising over $214 million.

In Fall 2012, the total student body was 22,565, of which 19,704 were undergraduate, 595 postbaccalaureate, and 2,266 graduate students. The percentage of first-time freshmen was 65.3%, constituting the highest percentage in ten years. On average, undergraduate students are enrolled in 13.2 semester units while postbaccalaureate and graduate students take an average of 12.3 and 9.7 units, respectively. Degrees awarded for the AY 2011-2012 year include 3,441 undergraduate, 954 masters, and 30 doctoral degrees. The number of master degrees awarded increased 17.6% from the previous year.

Faculty and Staff (CFR 3.1).

In fall 2012, Fresno State had 1,244 faculty members of whom 677 were full-time. Forty-three percent of all faculty members are tenure and tenure track. Student ratio amongst 541 tenure/tenure track faculty was 18:1. Ninety-six percent of the tenured faculty members held doctoral or other terminal degrees in their areas of study. About 32% of all faculty members

were associate or full professors who had been on campus at least seven years and demonstrated a commitment to the institution. Of the 1,244 total faculty members, 68% were White, 12% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 10.5% are Hispanic. Ethnicity amongst full-time faculty and amongst tenure/tenure track faculty was similar (+/-2%). Forty-seven percent of all faculty members were female. Distinguished faculty include Fulbright scholars; National Endowment for the Humanities and National Science Foundation scholars; internationally renowned authors and artists; Pulitzer Prize and Prix de Rome winners.

In fall 2012, employees total 2,099, of which 59.3% are faculty; 6.6% are managers; and 34.2% are staff. Seventy one percent of staff are full-time. Male employees comprise 48.7%, and female employees 51.2%.

Colleges and Programs.

Fresno State consists of eight colleges: Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (JCAST); Arts and Humanities; Craig School of Business; Kremen School of Education and Human Development; Lyles College of Engineering; Health and Human Services; Science and Mathematics; and Social Sciences. Four are "named" schools resulting from multimillion-dollar gifts, including the largest gift ever in the CSU system of almost $30 million to JCAST to create the state-of-the-art Jordan Research Center. The University offers 61 baccalaureate degree programs and 45 master degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences as well as in a variety of professional disciplines emphasizing agriculture, business, engineering and technology, health and human services, and education (see catalog). Graduate Studies also offers an Educational Specialist degree, a Doctorate of Educational Leadership, a Doctorate of Physical Therapy, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice, plus10 certificates of advanced study.

Off-campus Instructional Capacity.

The Kremen School launched the institution's first two fully online degree programs, the MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) and the MA in Reading. Three Fresno State certificate programs are also fully online as well as the Masters in Water Resource Management launched in Spring 2014. Support services for distance education are centralized in Technology Innovations for Learning and Teaching (*see* "Technological Infrastructure" below). Many courses are available online also, but Fresno State's innovations extend beyond that. For example, Fresno State has a partnership with West Hills Community College–Lemoore to offer a variety of courses on the Lemoore campus that lead toward a Bachelor's Degree. The courses are offered every term, including summer, at a variety of times and primarily in a video conference format with professors from Fresno State. The convenience of this opportunity for Lemoore area residents in tremendous and enables many to enroll and succeed in graduation from a four-year program, an otherwise daunting challenge.

Then and Now: Significant Changes 2003-2013

Guiding Documents (CFR 4.6).

Since 2003, several guiding documents of the University have changed: (a) the Mission and Vision statement (as part of the strategic planning process), (b) the Campus Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan for Excellence III 2006-11 and Strategic Plan for Excellence IV 2011-15), (c) a new Academic Plan (2011-16), and (d) a Campus Master Plan. Although our current Strategic Plan will remain in place through 2015, soon the University will begin work on framing the Strategic Plan for the next 5 years. Deeply engrained in the culture of the University is a commitment to student success, scholarship, and engagement with the region, elements that will

be prominent in our next strategic plan.

Student Enrollment.

From fall 2003-2012 enrollment has increased slightly from 22,342 students to 22,565 students; however, FTES increased from 18,467 to 19,687. The median age of students was 20.5 (undergraduate) and 26.6 (graduate). Gender remained stable, with females constituting about 57% of undergraduate students and 65% of graduate students. The dramatic shifts in enrollment have been by race/ethnicity. While enrollment decreases occurred mostly for white non-Hispanic students, we have seen enrollment increases among Asian and Hispanic students. From fall 2003 to fall 2012, Hispanic students rose from 25.6% to 38.8%. Asian enrollment rose from 11.5% to 14.8%. Meanwhile, white non-Hispanic enrollment declined from 36.4% to 28.8%. American Indian enrollment changed downward slightly from 0.9% to 0.4%, as did non-resident alien enrollment, declining from 3.8% to 3.0%.

More than 80% of new first-time freshmen and new undergraduate transfers came to Fresno State as dependent family income students. The proportion of new first-time freshmen and undergraduate transfer students from families below $24,000 per year increased from 25.2% to 29.5%. Pell Grant status is used as a proxy measure of low-income status, and first-time freshmen who are Pell Grant eligible rose from 47% to 65%. Undergraduate transfer student Pell eligibility changed from 43% to 57%. Overall, Pell Grant status changed from 45% to 62% during this decade.

The percentage of first-generation students also rose from 65.7% to 71.8%. By fall 2012, among first-time freshman and undergraduate transfers, 19.1% had parents with no high school education; 9.1% had parents with some high school education; 15.7% had parents who graduated

high school; 19.4% had parents with some college education; and 8.5% had parents who hold two-year college degrees.

Changes in the Cabinet. (CFR 3.8)

The President's Cabinet had been relatively stable since the last review until recently. The Associate Provost position changed hands in July 2008 due to a retirement. In January 2009, the Provost accepted a position in the Chancellor's office. An interim appointment served until July 2009 to allow for a nationwide search. The Associate Provost left for a Provost position in January 2012, and an interim appointment served until June 2014. The President retired in July 2013 after 22 years of service, and two of his vice presidents announced their retirement shortly thereafter. The Provost accepted a presidency in the CSU at that time as well. Successful national searches resulted in the appointment of a new President, a new Provost, and a new Vice President for student affairs, and a new Vice President for University Advancement (*Appendix 1.1*).

Infrastructure (CFR 3.5).

While financial changes are detailed in Section 7 and physical changes are summarized in Appendix 1.2, changes in technological infrastructure are introduced here for the unique ways that they expand or enhance direct educational effectiveness. Fresno State has been steadily building its technological infrastructure, and supporting both students and faculty to achieve maximal access and use. Faculty can receive one-on-one and group professional development through Technology Innovations for Teaching and Learning (TILT). TILT runs the Summer Teaching Innovations Academy that provides hands-on training for faculty to engage in high impact course re-design to make the best use of an array of tech tools. TILT also provides extensive consultation on integrating Universal Design into courses and, finally, manages the

[Blackboard Resource Center](). Fresno State's Tech Services recently completed a "Classroom Refresh" project for all centrally-funded SMART classrooms. Student access is supported through numerous computer labs on the campus, plus a Library Laptop Loan Program. Access to technology is currently being expanded, with a number of exciting initiatives, including Tablet and eportfolio initiatives designed to leverage today's technology to deepen student learning, prepare students for the workplace, and improve the assessment of student learning.

Contribution to Public Good

In addition to the Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning and the Carnegie Foundation "Community Engagement" classification noted above, Fresno State earned the Presidential Award for General Community Service from the Corporation for National and Community Service in 2008. This is the highest possible federal recognition for a university's commitment to community service. Since its Centennial challenge year (2011), Fresno State has provided over one million hours of service to the community annually. During AY 2012-13, 14,245 students, faculty, and staff spent 1,055,257 hours serving others. These hours equal an estimated value of over $27M. The Richter Center is only one among many however. The University has a large number of centers and programs that interact with the community as a knowledge partner, and a significant number of these are described in [Appendix 1.3]().

Response to Previous Commission Actions

Strengthening General Education (GE) and University Wide Assessment. (CFRs 2.3-2.6)

The University's response to our previous review has been rigorous, so a significant portion of this essay was reserved to discuss this. The Commission recommended that Fresno State focus on the assessment of its General Education (GE) program. In 2004 the GE program performed a review of *all* syllabi. In a report, the committee found that although the program required a minimum of 2,000 words of writing in every lower division GE course and 4,000 words in every upper division GE course, many courses required less writing and frequently the writing was in one final term paper at the end of the semester which students often didn't receive back from the instructor. As a result of these findings, the policy was changed to require 1,000 and 2,000 words of writing in lower and upper division GE courses respectively but required the writing be iterative. At least half of the required writing must be a sustained multi-page assignment on which the faculty provides feedback that the students can apply to improve their writing within the course.

Attempts were made between 2003 and 2006 to move forward with assessment of GE learning outcomes; however, the consistent feedback from faculty was that the learning outcomes which existed for the GE program were not appropriate and did not reflect what was being done in their courses. These earlier learning outcomes had not been developed in a collaborative way with significant input from the faculty, so the GE Committee undertook to develop a new set of learning outcomes for the program. In 2009, the Office of the Associate Vice President and Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided 25% release time for three faculty members to form a task force to coordinate the development of learning outcomes for the program with significant opportunity for faculty to provide input.

The task force used the GE program description as well as the CSU System Executive Order on GE to draft an initial set of learning outcomes with approximately three learning

outcomes for each of the 16 areas within the GE program. Open forums were then held for each broad area (e.g., area A, area B) of the program, and all faculty who had taught a course in that area within the previous three years were invited to participate. These forums were used to edit the preliminary draft, and the revised outcomes were sent out to the same group of faculty by email. Their feedback led to additional edits, and a final draft was sent out to all faculty, with an additional three week comment period. Their feedback was again incorporated, with a final set of outcomes approved by the Academic Senate in May of 2009.

The task force also was charged with developing a sustainable plan to assess the GE learning outcomes. Several models were considered including a "centralized model" where artifacts would be sampled from an array of courses within an area and evaluated by a team of faculty during the summer. Based on feedback from faculty, the task force felt this model would be unacceptable to faculty who believed this approach would limit the types of assignments that could be used in their courses. The task force settled on a "decentralized model" where individual departments would be asked to provide data on the achievement of GE learning outcomes in their courses.

Having developed a set of learning outcomes for the GE program, the GE committee began collecting data on the assessment of those learning outcomes. With 261 courses taught over 46 departments, the committee did not want to overwhelm departments with assessment efforts, and so beginning in spring 2010, asked each department teaching in the GE program to select one course, and within that course, select one learning outcome to assess for that year. If departments taught more than three sections of a course, they were asked to assess the outcome in a minimum of three sections. Each year, departments submit an assessment report to the GE committee, clarifying:

- *the learning outcome the department chose to assess ([GE learning outcomes](#))*
- *the assignment(s) or piece(s) of student work assessed*
- *the rubric or assessment method used to measure the outcome*
- *the metric and standard used to assess if a student has met the outcome (for example, a 4 out of 5 on a rubric, or a score of 75% on a series of questions).*
- *% of students who met the learning outcome*

Departments were notified that failure to provide assessment reports could result in the suspension of a course from the GE program.

This assessment has been repeated each year, with the departments asked to choose a new outcome and a new course each year. The GE committee now has four years of assessment reports covering the achievement of each learning outcome for the program.

Although the GE committee has been pleased that it has been able to collect meaningful data on the achievement of learning outcomes in the program, the current process is cumbersome. Reports must be collected from each department and then reviewed by the Committee before being combined for further analysis. In 2012, the Committee voted to support the transition to assessing GE learning outcomes through the use of eportfolios (described in components 3 and 4). All incoming freshmen will have a graduation requirement to demonstrate the achievement of each of the GE learning outcomes in their eportfolios. This will be accomplished by setting up a GE "template" portfolio that will require an artifact to be tagged to each of the GE learning outcomes (one artifact may serve as evidence of more than one learning outcome). Each of the learning outcomes will then be assessed by sampling a set of student work across multiple courses. The sample of work will be assessed by a panel of faculty who teach within that area of the GE program.

In 2012 a revision of the GE program description and policies and procedures was passed whereby the process for approving new courses in the program required a description of how the course meets each of the learning outcomes for that area of the program as well as a plan for how

the department will assess those outcomes. The policy also requires courses within the program

be periodically re-approved for inclusion in the program. This re-approval now requires

departments to provide assessment reports that demonstrate students meet the learning outcomes

for that area of the program.

Strengthen Assessment Efforts Across All Programs. (CFRs 2.3-2.6)

Considerable efforts have also been made to strengthen our outcomes assessment efforts

across all programs. Much of these efforts are described in detail in component 4; however, a

brief summary of those efforts is included here. In 2005, an MPP-level Director of Institutional

Research position was created and charged to oversee and promote quality assessment efforts on

campus. A template for a Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP) was created and required

of all programs. Each program must also designate a faculty member as the assessment

coordinator who has primary responsibility for coordinating assessment activities within the

program. Each program must report on outcomes assessment activities completed each year in

their annual report to the Provost.

In 2008 the Learning Assessment Team (LAT) was formed with a membership that

included faculty who had demonstrated leadership or a high degree of proficiency or knowledge

of outcomes assessment. The LAT met regularly to discuss ways of increasing both acceptance

by faculty and the quality of assessment efforts. In 2010 the group began reviewing the SOAPs

and annual assessment reports for all undergraduate programs each summer and rating them with

rubrics. This was expanded to include graduate programs in 2012. The results of this review are

reported to the Provost each year and have allowed the institution to track improvement in our

ratings each year (link here for 2013 report). These results are communicated back to programs

each fall in a meeting with assessment coordinators for every program as well as the Department

Chairs and Deans. We are now able to demonstrate that every program has a SOAP and that the quality of those SOAPs has increased each year. Similarly, we have been able to show improvement in the quality of the annual assessment reports each year.

In fall 2012, the Provost committed $81,000 over two years to fund college wide assessment coordinators. Typically, each college assessment coordinator is a faculty member released 3 WTU each semester (one course equivalent) to help programs within the college improve the quality of their SOAPs, annual reports, and program review self-study documents. These college coordinators meet as a group three times per semester with the Provost and Deans (or Associate Deans) to share strategies for improving assessment, and their knowledge of assessment.

University Aspirations within the Higher Education Community

The commission was concerned with the increased focus the University was placing on research, as at the time of the last visit, the Strategic Plan for Excellence II had as one of our goals to advance as a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University—Intensive institution. The commission stated "In the process of placing greater emphasis on research, scholarship and creative activity, the current attention given to student learning and community support should not be lost nor should the University flag in its commitment to improving the "human condition in the valley through opportunity, educational excellence, and applied research". This was addressed in the strategic planning process that began in 2005. The Strategic Plan for Excellence III (2006-2011) removed the goal of becoming a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University—Intensive institution and instead focused the University on "increasing opportunities for campus involvement in transformational scholarly research, service, and engagement" and "supporting research and scholarly work that engages the campus with the community".

This focus on regionally relevant and engaged applied research has become established in the culture of Fresno State and can be found in the current strategic plan as well as the academic plan. This commitment is further demonstrated by the cohort hires that were done as a result of the academic plan. A total of 35 faculty cohort hires were made beginning in 2010 to focus on five regionally important issues for the valley: health, multiculturalism in the United States, urban and regional transformation, water technology, management and quality and world cultures and globalization.

Developing an Academic Plan

The Commission also recommended that the University develop an academic plan. Under the supervision of then Provost Covino, an academic plan was developed in early 2010, with subsequent input from the Deans, the Provost's Leadership Team and the Chair of the academic senate. The final version was approved by the Provost's Leadership Team in September of 2010. The plan is centered on the three major themes of learning, scholarship and engagement.

Faculty Expectations. (CFR 2.8, 3.2)

The Commission also expressed concern about a lack of clarity among faculty about expectations for research in an environment where teaching is the premiere value for student success. Several significant changes were made, including: 1) the introduction of five interdisciplinary cohorts in the areas of Health; Multiculturalism in the U.S.; Urban and Regional Transformation; Water Technology, Management, and Quality; and World Cultures and Globalization. The cohorts consist of existing faculty and new faculty recruited for the specific cohort expectations in their appointment and evaluation documents. 2) During the last 3 years, funding from the Provost to provide assigned time for Research and Creative Activities increased

to the current level of $700,000/year. The process is competitive, with each Dean making the final award. 3) Evaluation of research activities within the retention, tenure, and promotion process have been more clearly defined in APM 325 Policy on Retention and Tenure (July 2013); APM 327 Policy on Promotion (October 2012); and APM 332 Policy on Range Elevation for Temporary Faculty (April 2013).

Adjunct Faculty. (CFR 2.1, 3.1)

The Commission also expressed concern about the increase in University classes taught by adjunct faculty (55%). In response, in 2011, due to a revision of APM 322, the University instituted a robust system for student ratings of faculty instruction - The IDEA Center. All departments created a policy that defines the frequency and the benchmarks for *all* faculty evaluations. In addition, changes to the Unit 3 Collective Bargaining Agreement require the evaluation of all temporary faculty when they are in the final year prior to receiving a three-year contract. Moreover, due to strong commitment at every level of the University, the percentage of adjunct faculty has remained demonstrably stable. When the MPP-level Director of Institutional Research position noted above was created, reporting on the status of adjunct faculty improved, including clarity on the process. For example, the terms "adjunct faculty" and "part-time" are explicitly reinforced as not synonymous. Combining the two terms creates confusion because adjunct faculty are not all part-time. Approximately 20 percent of our "adjunct" faculty are on full-time contracts. The University can report that in fall 2012, the total number of instructional faculty at all levels was 1,186. Of these, 670 or 56.5% were lecturers, which includes both temporary full-time (non-tenure track) and part-time (adjunct) faculty (Appendix 1.4). Also, adjunct faculty continue to benefit from the Collective Bargaining Agreement's provision in the

1990s that they receive three-year contracts, which increases the stability of their teaching at Fresno State.

The professional development of adjunct faculty presents two challenges: obtaining funding and reliable data. Professional development funds have been scarce during the prolonged recession, and most departments with funds available gave priority to tenure/tenure track faculty. Select internal professional development is open to all faculty, but centers like TILT do not track the status of the faculty attending, especially on the detail level of full-time temporary vs. part-time temporary. The data from many sources (e.g., standalone workshops) are either incomplete or unavailable. Data was available only for two significant conferences and a subset of faculty learning communities. For the current academic year (not including Tablet Summer Academy), 90 unique faculty participated, of which 15 were lecturers. In sum, the progress with adjunct faculty is steady although tracking of professional development for adjuncts should be improved.

Preparation for Review

The WASC Executive Committee comprised of 17 faculty, staff, students, and administrators launched the coordinating activities and writing of the self-study in earnest in fall 2012. The WASC Steering Committee is a widely representative body with 38 members, all of whom contribute in various ways, from writing sections of the self-study to providing feedback. The WASC Executive Committee formed several subcommittees to assist with the critical new components of the 2013 WASC *Handbook* (*see* component 2). The Executive Committee and the Steering Committee met monthly while the subcommittees met weekly, as required. Two campus open forums were held on April 28th and 29th, 2014 to solicit feedback on the self-study and to answer questions. Feedback from these forums and an online feedback form were incorporated into the document.

To help the reviewers locate additional referenced materials, the document also incorporates hyperlinks to outside support materials. Each CFR is referenced in the relevant subheading(s) of each essay. Because many of the CFRs relate directly to elements of the University's Strategic Plan, we have also provided a matrix in Table 1 that aligns themes of the strategic plan to the relevant WASC Standards.

Table 1. Alignment of WASC Standards with Fresno State's Strategic Plan

WASC Standards	Strategic Plan Area or Theme
Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives	Mission Statement Core Values Theme 1 Theme 4 Theme 5
Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions	Theme 1 Theme 2 Theme 3 Theme 7
Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability	Core Values Theme 4 Theme 6
Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement	Theme 1 Theme 2 Theme 7

2. COMPLIANCE WITH WASC STANDARDS AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS: SELF-REVIEW UNDER THE STANDARDS; COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Compliance Checklist (CFRs – all incl. 3.7)

In Spring 2013, the WASC Executive Committee engaged administrators across campus in a review of documents using the Compliance Checklist (Appendix 2.1). In general, the campus had a relatively complete set of policies. The President establishes policy in consultation with faculty, managers, and students, depending on the nature of the policy. The Academic Policy Manual contains all policies pertaining to Academic Affairs. The Academic Policy Manual is reviewed periodically and updates are made as policies become dated or faculty and/or administration identify a need.   The Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP) is a comprehensive reference of the most current policies issued by the University and updated.

After reviewing the compliance checklist, we believe campus policies are clear and readily available. Shared governance is strong with Academic Senate committees actively involved in development of institutional policy. While the full Academic Senate is the formal recommending body to the president of the University, the shaping of policies and procedures, and the review of proposed programs, occur within the elected standing committees and appointed subcommittees. Administrators (and in some instances students) serve ex-officio. Proposed policies or policy revisions are reviewed by a subcommittee, its parent standing committee, and the Executive Committee (on which the Provost and President sit). Each level screens and refines documents before presentation to the Academic Senate for deliberation. The President possesses the final decision-making authority.

The constitution and bylaws of the Academic Senate can be found online. Policies impacting students and degree requirements are clearly articulated in the catalog.

Self-Review Worksheet

The WASC executive committee formed several subcommittees to assist with the "Self-review under the Standards" (Appendix 2-2). In particular, two subcommittees—"meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree" and "core competencies"—were formed to take the leadership of examining a number of the criteria for review in Standard 2. Additionally, the Student Success Task Force, Graduation Rate Initiative Team, and Office of Institutional Effectiveness provided support in examining other criteria for review. The WASC executive committee provided additional answers to questions raised. This initial review was then vetted by several Academic Senate committees including the Graduate Committee and the Academic Policy & Planning Committee.

Strengths.

Our analysis identified several strengths at Fresno State:

1. Strategic planning processes have been inclusive and robust with five-year updates and annual reviews. The University's first three strategic plans—Plan for the 90s; Plan for Excellence I (1997-2000); Plan for Excellence II (2001-06)—established a foundation for a new level of excellence and a culture of planning on the campus. The Plan for Excellence III (2006-11) resulted in the recognition of the importance of the University engaging with its region and fueling key academic programs with private support. The current Plan for Excellence IV 2011-2015 calls for the University to aggressively pursue innovation in its academic programs, improve student success, and close the achievement gaps between all groups. The campus has in place a Master Plan guiding change in campus infrastructure, and an Academic Plan, which supports the overall Strategic Plan. Degree programs are aligned with the Strategic Plan. The campus consistently meets

enrollment and revenue targets and has clean audits. The mission and vision statements are periodically reviewed and updated as part of the strategic planning process.

2. There is a strong focus on student success, evidenced by the existence of many thriving student service programs. Student learning outcomes are ubiquitous at course and program levels and are publicly available. Program review is evidence-based, includes peer review, examines staffing levels, and involves school/college and university leaders. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides evidence in support of the reviews and maintains up-to-date data sets needed for evaluation purposes.

3. Faculty evaluation processes use instruments adopted to ensure validity and reliability. Both peer evaluations and student ratings of instruction occur.

4. The campus values diversity and has a number of established programs addressing associated issues such as the Student Success Task Force and the Title V-funded Commitment to Latina/o Academic Success & Excellence program. During fall 2011, the campus formed the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity (PCHRE) to develop a diversity plan for the campus community: ASPIRE (A Strategic Plan for Inclusion, Respect and Equity). Several ASPIRE initiatives are already underway. Fresno State's home page has a "Diversity and Inclusion" button that brings users directly to the site of the PCHRE.

Challenges.

Our self-review under the standards also highlighted several areas that need be addressed or improved. These are identified below along with the action being taken or where such action is discussed within this report:

1. The definition of "values and character" is not strong in the University mission statement. We anticipate addressing this in the update of the Strategic Plan in 2015.

2. While student learning outcomes and student outcomes assessment plans are widely used, and many have adopted standards of performance associated with these outcomes, not all programs have developed standards for all outcomes (*see* component 4).

3. There is a lack of data publicly available on the achievement of learning outcomes (*see* component 6)

4. Meaning, quality, and integrity are not terms we have used (*see* component 3).

5. Information literacy has not been an area of explicit focus except in limited areas (library) (*see* component 4)

6. The campus has not historically adopted institutional-level learning outcomes, but as part of this review process, we have developed institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) (*see* component 3).

7. GE assessment to this point exists mainly at the course rather than program level (*see* component 3).

8. A broader concept of faculty development is needed with increased attention to part-time faculty (see component 1)

3. DEGREE PROGRAMS: MEANING, QUALITY, AND INTEGRITY (MQI) OF DEGREES

Undergraduate Degrees

History (CFRs 1.1, 2.2).

At the request of the President, a group of faculty was convened in March of 2006 by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and charged to define the qualities of an undergraduate student at Fresno State. The task force, known as QDOGS (Qualities Desired of Graduating Students), recommended a University-wide "lived philosophy" of Achievement, Ethics, and Engagement (link to QDOGS report). These elements were to represent strong academic achievement and commitment to learning, a commitment to professional and social ethical behavior, and engagement in communities, professions, and learning. The group recommended that this lived philosophy be promoted and assessed through an eportfolio system mandated for all students that would require students to demonstrate how they had met each of the lived philosophy components, as well as a section that represented work in their major field of study.

Although these recommendations were made in spring 2008, they were not implemented, largely because the University could not settle on an eportfolio platform that could deliver what was needed for usability, accessibility, and assessment work. In December of 2013 the University chose Pathbrite as an eportfolio platform and began piloting it in selected courses in spring 2014.

One additional guidepost to identify the meaning of a Fresno State degree comes from the CSU system-wide survey "Putting Education to Work: 2011 CSU Career Directors Statewide Employer Survey." This survey found employers perceived CSU graduates having four distinctive qualities: 1) Teamwork; 2) Flexibility to respond to changing work demands; 3)

Capability to learn what is necessary to be effective in their assignments; and 4) Representing the diversity of the emerging workplace.

MQI subcommittee action.

The revision of the WASC *Handbook* in 2012-13 compelled the University to revive previous conversations about what it means to have a degree from Fresno State and what characteristics a graduate of this University should have. The Meaning, Quality and Integrity of Degrees Subcommittee was tasked with thinking about all of these issues and communicating with deans, chairs, faculty, staff, and students about this issue. The subcommittee, which began meeting in October 2012, included the WASC Faculty Chair, several administrators, several department chairs, and the Coordinator of Psychological Services. To develop an understanding of how to view the meaning, quality, and integrity of campus degrees, subcommittee members attended WASC workshops in October 2012, May 2013, and November 2013.

Development of institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.2a, 2.4).

The subcommittee reviewed and discussed multiple frameworks including AACU's LEAP Essential Leaning Outcomes and Lumina's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP). The group settled on creating ILOs that reflected most of the areas of learning from the DQP, but also incorporated some of the less specific language from LEAP's Essential Learning Outcomes and the ideas of achievement, ethics, and engagement recommended by the QDOGS group. The discussion of MQI and the ILOs was also guided by the University's mission statement and the recent campus branding initiative, "Discovery, Diversity, and Distinction."

The subcommittee drafted and began a university-wide discussion of an initial set of ILOs. Representatives of the subcommittee met and discussed the ILOs with the WASC

Executive Committee, the WASC Steering Committee, and the University Assessment of

Learning Committee. Following revisions based on that feedback, the committee distributed the

draft ILOs to faculty and staff. Members of the subcommittee led two campus-wide open forums

held on March 18 and 21, 2013, where the subcommittee answered questions and solicited

feedback. Feedback from faculty, staff, and students was also collected through an online web

site. The Associate Provost and WASC Faculty Chair met with the student government to share

the ILOs and secure feedback. Finally, the ILOs were shared with the Council of Chairs, the

Academic Policies & Procedures Committee, the Academic Standards and Grading

Subcommittee, the Senate Executive Committee, and the full Academic Senate.

 The end result is a set of ILOs that reflect the mission statement's language of

engagement (the campus is a Carnegie Community Engaged University), diversity,

internationalization, distinction, and ethics. The ILOs ([provided here](#)) focus on the achievement

of *broad integrative knowledge* (largely encompassed in the GE program), *specialized

knowledge* (reflecting the discipline), *intellectual skills* (encompassing the core competencies),

application of knowledge (students integrating knowledge and skills to an applied project), and

finally *achievement, ethics, and engagement* (elements reflecting the unique culture of Fresno

State).

Assessment of ILOs. (CFRs 2.6, 2.11, 2.12, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

An eportfolio implementation team has been meeting since spring 2013 and has created

an action plan for entering students being required to create and maintain an eportfolio beginning

fall 2016. The eportfolio program will enable students to take increased ownership of their own

learning, demonstrate that they have met both the Institutional and the GE learning outcomes (by

submitting GE assignments to their eportfolio), and showcase both their academic and non-

academic achievements. In pilot instances, students are documenting their community service through eportfolios and showcasing a chosen culture through images, maps, links, data, and narratives. There are also campus discussions for utilizing eportfolios to document co-curricular experiences and for academic advising.

Eportfolios in degree programs.

Eportfolios are also envisioned as a means of assessing degree programs. The History department began a pilot program in spring 2014 tying eportfolios to assessment. Beginning history students take an introduction to history course in which they submit a library exercise, a short research paper, and a video that discusses why they are a history major and what they think history is about. In the culminating history course students will submit a large paper and another video reflecting on their time as a history major. Department faculty will compare a student's progress and engage in an ongoing discussion about student learning.

Other departments have plans to adopt the eportfolio platform to document student learning. Eportfolios and "folio thinking" will allow students to not only use and benefit from a variety of new media but showcase traditional skills such as writing, research, and critical thinking to future employers.   Eportfolios will allow faculty to engage in more meaningful assessment of student work while reducing the logistical burden of coordinating assessment efforts.

Graduate Degrees (CFR 2.2, 2.2b)

Fresno State graduate programs leading to postbaccalaureate credentials, masters, and doctoral degrees are designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to assume leadership roles. It is expected that graduates will be able to generate and apply knowledge in real world situations, make evidence-based decisions, monitor progress

toward goals, and make course corrections as needed, to ultimately improve the quality of life for all citizens of our vast, economically challenged, and historically underserved service area. In AY 2012-2013, graduate students were involved in 1,215 research projects that generated 233 presentations and 107 publications in journals and other academic media (OIE Strategic Plan Indicators). During that same time period, graduate students were involved in thousands of hours of service to the community through service-learning coursework, course-embedded fieldwork/practicum, and internships, according to estimates from the Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning. As an example, in AY 2012-2013, graduate students in the Marriage and Family Therapy program provided 6,000 hours of free or reduced cost counseling service to low income families in the Fresno metropolitan area. In AY 2013-2014, that number is projected to approach 10,000 hours.

Graduate degrees presuppose literacies, breadth, subject-matter knowledge, and a bachelor's degree. While all post-baccalaureate credentials, masters, and doctoral degrees must meet certain broad requirements, the discipline-specific meaning of graduate degrees varies with the program. Graduate programs may involve productive laboratories (e.g., Engineering), innovative initiatives (e.g., Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership), hands-on field experiences (e.g., Marriage & Family Therapy), or a collaborative and interdisciplinary curricula (e.g., Biotechnology).

While some master's degree graduates are accepted into doctoral programs around the nation, others join doctoral graduates and become leaders in their fields—in business, government, education, and non-profit organizations. During the period of 2009-2012, 168 graduates of Fresno State entered doctoral programs across the nation and the world—90 in the Life Sciences, 17 in the Social Sciences, and 61 in other disciplines (summary table by ethnicity

here). Graduates go on to become principals in local schools, astronauts, poet laureates, professors, scientists, community leaders, researchers, teachers, mentors, policy makers, and entrepreneurs.   The success of these graduates, highlighted in a recent Division of Graduate Studies document, speaks eloquently to the campus's overarching vision of becoming nationally recognized for education that transforms students and improves the quality of life in the region and beyond.

Although we believe our graduate programs are strong, we have not yet defined a set of common institutional outcomes that define all of our varied graduate programs as we have done for our undergraduate programs. Currently the University Graduate Committee is having these discussions and should have a set of common outcomes in the next academic year.

Processes to Ensure Quality of Degrees (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

The campus has a multi-layered approval and assessment process to ensure educational effectiveness and continuous improvement.

Program-based assessment. (CFRs 2.6, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

Every undergraduate and graduate program has student learning outcomes that are program- rather than course-based. Course student learning outcomes are part of program outcomes because the assessment process is tuned to capture the dynamics of students' progress and cumulative experience, not how they do in a specific course. In addition, the campus has the GE learning outcomes based on the essential learning outcomes in the AACU's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) project.

A Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP) exists for all programs. These plans are based on a standard SOAP template that has the following components:

- *Mission statement, goals, and objectives*
- *Curriculum plan (objectives by course matrix)*
- *Direct and indirect measures used to collect data of student learning outcomes*
- *Outcomes and method matrix (which method is used to measure which outcome)*
- *Timeline of assessment activities*
- *Closing the loop (a description of the process used to ensure that the data are used to improve student learning)*

This template mirrors WASC guidelines for learning outcomes assessment, and its language matches WASC definitions wherever possible. The template emphasizes these elements:

Assessment (of student learning) – an ongoing, iterative process consisting of four basic steps: 1. defining learning outcomes; 2. Choosing a method or approach and then using it to gather evidence of learning; 3. analyzing and interpreting the evidence; and 4. using this information to improve student learning (WASC 2013 [Handbook](), p. 42).

SOAPs help to articulate the meaning, quality, and integrity of degree programs. Faculty, together with stakeholders, identify overarching domains of learning and the levels of proficiency represented by the degree, then develop a multi-year sustainable plan that articulates when and how these domains and levels of proficiency are assessed. Curriculum/outcomes matrices clearly specify where program goals and learning outcomes are expected to be achieved and measured. Using [these matrices]() as guides**,** faculty members create learning environments that enable students to meet expectations.

The SOAP also identifies when each outcome is to be evaluated. Assessment plans emphasize direct (but also employ indirect) measures, to capture valid indicators of student learning. Direct measures of student learning outcomes are derived from a variety of sources, including capstone courses, senior projects, course projects, performances, term papers, and exams. In addition, independent external measures are also used if applicable, such as national

exams or professional certification tests. Indirect measures of student learning outcomes consist of alumni surveys, employer surveys, exit surveys, and interviews.

Assessment focuses on understanding the trend of student learning and how curriculum adjustment can improve long-term effectiveness of teaching and learning. When student learning outcomes data are analyzed and gaps are detected, a timely and effective response is to be implemented in the curriculum to address the learning outcome deficiency and to improve both teaching and learning.

Annual reports on assessment activities are submitted to the Provost. Assessment coordinators are in place in all departments and colleges/schools to assure SOAPs are being followed and data are acted upon.

Program Approval and Review (CFRs 2.7, 3.1, 4.1, 4.3-4.7).

New programs go through a system-mandated approval process. Programs are placed on a master plan approved by the Board of Trustees. Faculty then develop the program which must be approved at department, college/school, and university levels. Separate committees consider undergraduate and graduate programs. New courses and changes to existing courses go through a similar process without going to the system level.

All academic programs undergo program review every five to seven years, providing a mechanism for faculty to evaluate the effectiveness, progress, and status of their academic programs. The primary purpose of the review is to improve the program by thoroughly and candidly evaluating the following (Fresno State Academic Policy Manual 220, updated June 2010):

- *the mission and goals of the program and their relation to the mission and strategic priorities of the institution,*
- *the curriculum through which program mission and goals are pursued,*

- *the assessment of student learning outcomes, program revisions based upon those outcomes, and plans for future assessment activities,*
- *the range and quality of research activities, emphasizing those involving students,*
- *the quality and diversity of faculty and staff and their contributions to program mission and goals,*
- *the quality of entering students (for graduate programs and others with restricted enrollment),*
- *libraries and other educational resources,*
- *physical facilities, and*
- *service and contributions to the community.*

While all these elements of the program review are related to educational quality, the third element directly assesses student learning outcomes. The program review policy is now under discussion in the Academic Senate. In the current process, a review team (one off-campus discipline expert, one on-campus person from outside the school/college and one from within) reviews the self-study, makes a campus visit, and develops a report. The Provost and the Dean craft a response to the team report and all of these documents are then reviewed by a university-level faculty committee. All documents are used by the department to develop an action plan that is then vetted and approved by the Dean and the Provost. A report to the Provost summarizing activities in response to the program review is required annually (although see discussion in section 6).

University-Level Review of Assessment (CFR 2.6, 2.7, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4).

A central review of assessment efforts (as documented in the SOAPs and annual assessment reports) is conducted each summer by a University Learning Assessment Team (LAT) formed of faculty who are assessment experts in their fields. In coordination with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the faculty group reviews department/program SOAPs against a rubric to ensure that each has the required elements and that the methods outlined will provide a reasonable measure for the learning outcomes. The annual assessment reports are also measured with a rubric assuring alignment of the report with the SOAP, assessing the quality of

the analysis, and verifying whether or not the program used the data to make appropriate changes in instruction. Results are shared and discussed with assessment coordinators, department chairs and deans. The LAT also serve as consultants and mentors to program/department assessment coordinators and faculty in SOAP revision. This process involves faculty and administrators in a continuous discussion about student learning, success, and program improvement.

Assessment of General Education (CFR 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6).

This was addressed in the section 1 as it was a response to our prior review.

Looking forward, the ILOs have been identified, yet they are not yet fully incorporated into individual degree programs. This is a key next step, and it will need to include how ILOs are met in each program, a metric and standard, and determination of where, when, and how assessment will occur. Some of that assessment might be done within the major but some should probably occur in upper-division GE courses. The logistics of putting a successful eportfolio system into practice to assess student learning and degree programs are being addressed. It is also clear that to better assess each program, standards of performance need to be specified to ensure that desired outcomes are being met and programs need to explicitly consider the meaning of their degrees. The campus must also come to agreement on what the revised program review process should be. Finally, we need to ensure learning outcomes dovetail with the University mission and that a "Culture of Quality" becomes part of the institution that embodies a commitment to the integrity and quality of every degree.

4. EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: STUDENT LEARNING, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE AT GRADUATION

Student Learning

Strategic Plan indicators on educational quality and student performance.

The 2011-2015 Strategic Plan of California State University, Fresno establishes the direction for the University as it begins its second century. The Strategic Plan lists seven (7) themes, with the first two focusing on student learning and success.

Theme 1. Enhance the Student Learning Environment

The University will improve learning for its diverse student population by placing emphasis upon effective traditional teaching methods, innovative pedagogy and active learning through research experiences, internships, service learning, and learning communities/ cohorts. We will accomplish this by promoting teamwork, academic rigor, learning assessment, personal inquiry, information literacy, ethics, and problem solving.

Theme 2. Commitment to Student Transformation and Success

The University will aggressively focus on student success and transformation, emphasizing data driven and research-based strategies, and provide support for faculty to undertake these activities.

[Indicators](#) of student success and educational quality, besides improved retention and graduation rates, include the following:

- *Increased number of students involved in scholarship and creative projects outside their regular coursework.*
- *Quality of student scholarship and creative projects (judged by external awards, publications and presentations, and so on).*
- *Increased pass rate and course GPA of students in redesigned courses.*
- *Improved senior and value-added CLA test scores.*
- *Higher percentage of seniors who have engaged in enriching educational experiences than that of our Carnegie peer group.*

In Fall 2012, the University collected its first-year Strategic Plan indicators. A total of 3,935 Fresno State students in AY 2011-12 were involved in projects and research activities

outside their regular coursework, and 1,073 students either published with their professors or presented their research at professional conferences. Six courses were offered in a redesigned format (including biology and chemistry GE courses that are typically high failure rate courses), and their passing rates increased by at least 6% over historical averages while maintaining the same rigor of the course content and evaluation.

While most of these indicators of educational quality are *benchmarks,* CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) value-added test scores are a *comparative indicator* (WASC 2013 *Handbook*, p. 44) because these scores compare students at Fresno State against their peers. In 2012, our senior value-added test score was 1,096 with a CLA index of 0.94. This index is positive and statistically significant as reported by CLA, evidence that Fresno State's seniors are slightly above their peers in learning quality. Fresno State seniors in 2012 received an index of 36.6 from the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report in how likely college seniors are engaged in enriching educational experiences (similar activities as listed in the first two Strategic Plan indicators). This index was similar to those of Fresno State's Carnegie peers with no statistically significant difference.

The core competencies set forth in CFR 2.2a are each reflected in the learning outcomes and a stand-alone course of the general education program (with the exception of information literacy, which is specifically defined in some program level outcomes, but not all). The core competencies are also reflected at the upper division level in the majority of program SOAPs. The newly developed ILOs specifically target all five core competencies.

Measuring and monitoring educational quality in academic major programs (CFRs 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 4.4).

The policies and procedures to measure and monitor the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees, with the aim of capturing the student experience, and the progress in doing so were addressed in component 3, which included a thorough discussion of SOAPS, SOAP coordinators, college/school coordinators, program assessment coordinators, the LAT, and so on. A policy deserving note, however, is the Academic Senate policy reiterating the authority of faculty in their specific disciplines for student and program assessment because they are the best judges of educational quality and learning in their fields:

"The faculty should have primary responsibility for establishing the criteria for assessment and the methods for implementing it. [AAUP statement "Mandated Assessment Educational Outcomes" June 1991]

In line with this policy, the position of program assessment coordinator is filled by a tenure or tenure-track faculty member as part of department service, and the coordinator takes the lead in conducting annual program assessment. All faculty members in the program are obligated to participate in the assessment process.

Annually, departments and colleges provide extensive reports to the Provost to answer these four questions:

- *What learning outcomes did you assess this year?*
- *What instruments did you use to assess them?*
- *What did you discover from these data?*
- *What changes did you make as a result of the findings?*

The LAT team also reviews and evaluates the department assessment reports addressing the Provost's questions. Programs receive feedback each year from the LAT so that they can improve their work the next year.

Besides the institutionalized processes for assessment, in May 2013, Fresno State invited an external evaluator, an expert in assessment, Dr. Carol Ann Gittens from the University of Santa Clara, to review all SOAPs and annual reports. Her excellent work provided invaluable suggestions to the University assessment team and helped improve the SOAPs and annual assessment activities.

Core Competencies

Evidence of educational quality: Written Communication Competency (CFR 2.4, 2.6).

After careful consideration, Fresno State decided to choose Written Communication as the core competency to be evaluated for its accreditation in 2014-15 because Fresno State has established a campus-wide policy and system in teaching and evaluating writing.

Students at Fresno State either take an upper division writing course (a "W" designation with a series of course requirements outlined in APM 216 including 5,000 words of required student writing) or pass a writing exam (the Upper Division Writing Exam) to fulfill the requirement of writing competency before they can graduate. Many (but not all) departments offer upper division writing courses, which also qualify as major elective courses in these departments with the goal of helping students learn the conventions of writing in their disciplines. Academic advisors and faculty members work with students to help them decide whether they should take the exam or the writing course. Students can take the writing test twice, and those who fail both tests are required to take the course.

In Spring 2013 Fresno State conducted an evaluation of written competency among its undergraduate students. The complete evaluation report can be found here, and a brief summary of its findings is given below.

- *Seventy-one percent (71%) of the writing course samples and 94% of the writing exam samples are rated at Competent or Accomplished levels of written competency.*
- *Of the five areas of evaluation, Academic Conversation and Assessment-Judgment Capacity are relatively weak. Students performed the best in the area of Language Effectiveness in both writing course and writing exam samples.*
- *Student college entry characteristic are not significantly associated with written competency, except their high school GPA.*
- *Seniors performed better than juniors (they are 2.6 times less likely than juniors to be at the Developing level).*
- *Fresno State GPA has a strong and positive association with written competency.*
- *Writing course grades are not significantly associated with competency levels.*

The findings indicate that student demographic and financial background at the time of college entry is not statistically related to writing competency near graduation (most students in the sample are seniors), but high school GPA continues to affect how well a student writes. Transfer GPA, however, is not significantly related to writing competency.

These findings are encouraging. The lack of significant association between student college background characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, financial resources) indicates that inequality at college entry is somewhat leveled off due to education the students have received at Fresno State. Another support to this conclusion is the better performance of seniors: one more year in school is translated to better writing competency.

Standards of Performance at Graduation

Evaluation of all five core competencies: A comprehensive plan (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.1, 4.3).

Fresno State is planning a comprehensive strategy to evaluate the five core competencies in student learning. This plan of evaluation is tied to the Strategic Plan themes of improving educational quality and to program SOAPs. The following steps and instruments will be considered for core competency evaluations.

1. Institutionalized requirement of core competency assessment and program review.
Fresno State is in the process of revising its periodic program review procedures to give faculty more choices in what goals they set to evaluate their programs so they can better demonstrate the vitality and efficiency of their program. The assessment of core competencies may be incorporated into the requirements for future program reviews.

2. Continued SOAP development and enrichment. Student learning outcome assessment plans are well developed and have become an institutionalized method to monitor and evaluate student learning. The goals and outcomes in these plans have largely captured the five core competency requirements as outlined by WASC in most programs, but the specific plan language may not have aligned with the WASC standard. Faculty at Fresno State may incorporate core competency evaluation into their program/department SOAPs and evaluate students near the time of their graduation. Most of the work required for this alignment to incorporate core competency evaluation into SOAPs is a re-organization of SOAP language, not new SOAPs. For example, effective written communication is a goal in all program SOAPs. Further development of SOAPs can include core competencies in writing, information literacy, and critical thinking. Programs that offer research methods courses will have an opportunity to revise their SOAPs so that goals in quantitative reasoning and critical thinking can be evaluated.

3. Instruments of core competency evaluation. Currently, about 83% of programs and departments at Fresno State have a Capstone course where students near graduation demonstrate their cumulative experience and learning. These Capstone courses should be the primary source of competency evaluation. Capstone courses typically have a component of oral and written communication. Engagement activities in the course will require planning, designing, and analysis, which can produce evidence for the other three core competencies (critical thinking,

quantitative reasoning, and information literary). Redesigning Capstone courses can help better align student cumulative experience with all five core competencies. Fresno State is proposing Capstone courses for programs that do not yet have one, for use as a source of core competency evaluation.

When Fresno State implements the eportfolio system campus-wide in fall 2016, students can use them to record and display the full range of their academic work. Besides Capstone courses, for example, many programs have requirements that include senior projects or other cumulative experience projects. These sources have already been included in SOAPs for outcomes assessment and may provide evidence of all five core competencies.

We expect many programs will also adopt this system for program-level outcomes. The eportfolio system is designed to provide an easily accessible data source for faculty to evaluate selected core competencies (described in component 3).

To establish an institutionalized core competency assessment, the University's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee passed new policies in Fall 2013 that require all students graduating from the University to complete a culminating experience developed and approved by their major departments as a graduation requirement. Culminating experiences provide students an opportunity to apply knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in earning their degree.

A culminating experience requirement may be a seminar, discussion, laboratory course, senior project, performance, research paper, internship, independent study, creative activity, or exhibit. The experience should synthesize learning developed across the curriculum and require a significant amount of student work. Culminating experiences must be taken for a letter grade, and should generally be taken after completion of the writing requirement and 90 units have been earned.

When this policy is implemented in AY 2014-15 and beyond, all academic programs will have a source of data that can be captured in eportfolios and produce evidence in the five core competency areas, and evaluate student learning outcomes in the context of the academic field.

4. Core competency evaluation models. The five core competency areas are differently reflected in educational process and curricula across disciplines at Fresno State. Three of the five cores are relatively universal: written communication, information literary, and critical thinking. All students are exposed to learning and training in these areas regardless of their major field. These core competencies could be candidates for a campus-wide and centralized evaluation process. The other two core competencies―oral communication and quantitative reasoning―differ significantly between disciplines in how they are emphasized in curriculum and expected levels of proficiency. These competencies are better suited for a de-centralized evaluation system performed at the college or program level.

5. Standards of performance. Standards of student performance in the core competency areas shall be set according to which evaluation model is applied. For a de-centralized evaluation model, faculty in their respective disciplines will set standards that are appropriate to the program mission and expected learning outcome. Specifically, rubrics, Capstone courses, and other cumulative experience components are used to examine the proportions of students who meet the standards found in program SOAPs in each of the academic programs. The standards of performance on each core competency will be explicitly stated in SOAPs and program review documents, together with a timetable of periodic evaluation by core areas. These standards and measures in each of the disciplines represent a *benchmark of student performance* (WASC 2013 *Handbook*, p. 43), and will be made available in program evaluation documents on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness' website (*see* Student Learning Outcome Assessment Plan).

With a centralized model of evaluation, the University will use standardized methods of data collection and evaluation rubrics to assess levels of competency.

Data collection.

The University will organize a core competency evaluation committee and design a campus-wide random sampling plan to collect student work in each of the core competency areas. The data sources include, not are not limited to, student academic performance samples from eportfolios, Capstone projects, senior projects, term papers, or other performance data in cumulating experiences.

Measures and standards.

Similar to benchmarks that are used in the de-centralized model, campus-wide benchmarks will be used to evaluate student core competencies.

The evaluation rubric used for core competencies (appendices 4-1 through 4-5) and Written Communication Core Evaluation is the measure that sets the standard for each core competency. Students of different disciplines may be expected to perform at different levels and measured by different benchmarks. The core competency evaluation committee will consult with faculty and obtain the Faculty Senate approval to set the appropriate performance standard and benchmark by disciplines. These rubrics will be modified, improved, and approved by the Academic Senate before they are applied to core competency evaluation.

An action plan for evaluation of all core competencies.

In Spring 2014, Fresno State appointed a standing committee charged with the leadership of exploring the best strategy and practice in core competency evaluation. This committee shall consider SOAPs, academic unit annual report, and program review with core competency evaluation, and establish a comprehensive strategy with a streamlined action plan and strong

faculty support. This committee will work closely with all constituents (faculty and students) and consult the University community about core competency evaluation strategies. By Fall 2014, an action plan will be finalized that outlines strategies of core competency evaluation.

Starting in 2014-15, Fresno State will evaluate one of the five core competencies annually along a clear timeline. The detailed action plan will be finalized by the University's core competency evaluation committee. It is suggested that written communication, information literacy, and critical thinking cores will be evaluated first because they are relatively more universal in curricula and student learning outcomes than quantitative reasoning and oral communication.

2014-2015— Critical thinking

2015-2016— Information literacy

2016-2017— Oral communication

2017-2018—Quantitative reasoning

2018-2019— Written communication

5. STUDENT SUCCESS: STUDENT LEARNING, RETENTION, AND GRADUATION

In 2002, California State University, Fresno implemented a campus-wide Student Success Task Force (SSTF), whose membership includes the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs as co-chairs, along with faculty, staff, and student representatives from all disciplines and administrative units. SSTF members collaborated to assess retention strategies on the campus, research best practices on other campuses, and design a series of initiatives and interventions over the past 11 years that have focused on improving student retention and graduation rates for both native full-time, first-time freshmen and transfer students. Many of these initiatives focus on student learning to increase student engagement and therefore retention and graduation rates.

Student Learning (CFRs 1.1, 2.2a, 2.9- 2.14)

One of the student learning initiatives that exemplifies Fresno State's commitment is service learning. Fresno State students are engaged in volunteerism and community service through service-learning courses offered across the curriculum and activities related to service in campus organizations. These experiences in particular prepare students for success in their chosen fields. For 2012-13, there were currently 145 service-learning courses across 31 different departments, enrolling 3,880 students who provided over 95,000 hours of community service. This was just a portion of the 14,000-plus students who provided over 1 million hours of services last year alone. Campus research demonstrates that students who engage in service learning courses have a higher graduation rate (Appendix 5-1).

Another pride point is our Commitment to Latina/o Academic Success and Excellence (CLASE) program funded by a Title V Hispanic-Serving Institution grant (Department of

Education). CLASE's mission is to train faculty campus-wide in course redesign for high failure rate and gatekeeper courses. The effort improves overall student learning: the universal design learning strategies and tactics implemented to boost underrepresented minority (URM) student success also enhance the courses for non-URM students. Through the summer of 2013, a total of 64 courses and over 100 faculty had undergone course redesign training. A total of 21 of those courses have implemented their redesigned curriculum through the spring 2013, impacting over 11,000 students, with a combined total of 1,328 more students passing ("C" or better letter grade) than would have at the previous pass rates. For example, a biology general education course has consistently had very positive results since its redesign, with the pass rate increasing from 64.7% to 86.5%. In addition, the average course grade point average increased from 1.91 to 2.78 (report link).

Similar initiatives and interventions are extensive and have been captured in appendix 5-2 and 5-3. Under STTF's guidance, a range of initiatives have been implemented year-by-year for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors—both native full-time, first-time freshmen and transfer students. Transfer students' needs in particular are addressed through a transfer graduation plan and through system-wide policies that have been implemented to create a more accessible and efficient pipeline between community colleges and the CSU (appendix 5-2).

Select initiatives and interventions are named below to illustrate that there is no single initiative or intervention on which we rely. Initiatives are designed to address specific challenges students face through their academic careers through multiple support services accessed at various points in the college progression. A variety of strategies, pedagogy, technology, and teaching modalities to improve student engagement and student success are then deployed by

faculty and departments. Finally, the efforts are assessed for effectiveness and are enhanced, modified, or increased, depending upon the identified measures of success:

- *Learning Communities*
- *Academic Success/Skills Course* *(and effectiveness study)*
- *The Learning Center (comprehensive academic support center through which the particularly effective high impact practice of Supplement Instruction has been implemented with rigor)*
- *SupportNet (early warning program that identifies struggling students for intrusive intervention)*
- *Summer Bridge (facilitates transition of URM, low-income, and first-generation students to the University)*
- *Educational Opportunity Program*
- *College Assistance Migrant Program (U.S. Department of Education grant-funded).*

The University also has several discipline-specific initiatives designed to give students a richer experience through an engaging curriculum, extra-curricular student support, or specific internships or work experience along with interactions with industry employers. A representative sample of the programs includes the following:

- *Health Careers Opportunity Program*
- *Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program*
- *Title IV-E (Social Work)*
- *Engineering Pathways*
- *Valley Industry Partnership*
- *Teaching Fellows*
- *Mini-corps (Education)*
- *Craig School of Business Honors Program*

Resources.

Over the last decade, the financial resources to develop and maintain our initiatives have come from multiple sources including the Division of Academic Affairs, the Division of Student Affairs, and institutional support through the Strategic Plan's "Plan for Excellence" funds. The cumulative funding from these sources has exceeded $1 million. Most recently, as part of the

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CSU system-wide Graduation Rate Initiative, our campus received $500,000 of permanent funding to continue the Supplemental Instruction, Early Warning (SupportNet), and Learning Communities programs. Also, for the past 3 years, we have received approximately $120,000 per year in "Instructional Related Activities" student funding. These sources of revenue from all facets of the University demonstrate the institution-wide commitment to student success.

Retention and Graduation (CFRs 1.2, 2.10-2.13, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4)

The SSTF has defined student success in terms of increased 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates, with the increased 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-year retention rates that lead to improved graduation rates. In addition, the SSTF recognized that student success also includes providing experiences that ensure life skills and instill values that prepare the student for personal and professional success. These skills and values are largely summarized in the ILOs outlined in component 3.

During the student's 2nd year through graduation, the focus on student retention and graduation is placed at the department level. The Provost has asked college/school Deans and Department Chairs to intervene with at-risk students in their departments in an effort to support student success and to provide intervention/support as needed. In support of this effort, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) tracks and monitors student cohort performance, identifying at-risk factors of cohort students and providing to the Chairs targeted report lists of the students at-risk. Department faculty use the information for targeted communications and interventions (see also "*Data*" below).

Department faculty advise at-risk students in an effort to mitigate challenges that may inhibit timely degree completion. In addition, departments identify students who have exceeded the 130-credit limit (120 units is the typical target for degree completion), requiring them to develop an approved graduation plan before registering for courses to continue their degree

program. This is designed to reduce the number of "super seniors" (>150units) and focus attention on timely degree completion for these students. A Mandatory Advising Checkpoint policy was also established where students must (1) visit with an advisor before being allowed to enroll for their third semester, (2) declare a major by their 60th unit, (3) review their degree roadmap with an advisor by their 75th unit, and (4) file a graduation plan with the Dean of Undergraduate Services upon earning more than 150 units. All of these advising initiatives are enforced with a hold on registration. The University's commitment to students' clear understanding of academic requirements and their chosen academic program needed to succeed is further demonstrated through the degree requirements and academic policies in the University Catalog available online. For most degree programs, the catalog lists the department, course, curriculum, and career-related information, including a roadmap that shows students the recommended sequencing of courses.

CSU Graduation Rate Initiative.

In fall 2009, the CSU Office of the Chancellor launched the *CSU Graduation Initiative: Closing the Achievement Gap* as part of the nationwide Access to Success Initiative, a project of the National Association of System Heads and The Education Trust. The CSU System pledged to increase the six-year graduation rate by eight percentage points (from 46% to 54%) and reduce the achievement gap by half (from 11% to 5.5%).

When comparing themselves to the top quartile of national averages of similar institutions, each campus was to set its own graduation rate target. The Fresno State campus plan, submitted to Chancellor's Office in 2009-10, stated the goal to increase by 2015-16 the graduation rate by six percentage points from 45% to 51%; and to cut the achievement gap between URM and non-URM groups by half, from 14% to 7%.

Fresno State is serving a growing number of URM, first-generation, and financially underprivileged students, yet we are on track to meet the goal: student success rates in terms of retention and graduation have increased. The average 1st-year retention rate from 2003 to 2011 is 83.5% for all students, and 81.6% for URM students. Comparing the most recent cohort years with previous history, the average 1st-year retention rate for URM students is 80.3% from 2003 to 2008 cohorts, and improved to 84.0% for 2009 to 2011 cohorts. The average 2nd-year retention rate for URM students is 70% from 2003 to 2007 cohorts, and improved to 74.5% for 2008 to 2010 cohorts. The average 3rd-year retention rate for URM students is 65.1% from 2003 to 2006 cohorts, and improved to 67.3% for 2007 to 2009 cohorts.

The 6-year graduation rates for fall 2002 to fall 2006 first-time and full-time freshmen cohorts (most recent data) range from 47.8% to 50.6% with an average of 48.7% for all students. For URM students, these rates range between 38.1% and 44.5%, averaging 41.8%. For these cohorts of students, Fresno State improved graduation rates for all, and the progress is slightly greater for URM students.

Directly contributing to our success rates for URM students are Special Support Programs (SSPs). In a spring 2013 study of SSPs, OIE found programs like the Educational Opportunity Program significantly improve students' retention and graduation rates. Those who participate in SSPs are more likely to be retained after their 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year. Furthermore, students in SSPs are more likely than other students to graduate with a bachelor's degree within 6, 7 and 8 years (appendix 5-4).

Our concerted efforts have produced other verifiable results. For example, an analysis of OIE student success data clearly illustrated that URM students are proportionately represented in several co-curricular activities that support their learning and development. The engagement of

URM students on leadership boards and in other leadership activities has exceeded the proportion of that group in the campus population. Hispanic/Latino penetration was 39.5% and White was 40.7%. In addition, African American students represented 6.2% of leadership activity, with their campus population only representing 4.4%. Furthermore, the Co-curricular Leadership Certificate Program had a 45% URM participation rate, and the Emerging Leaders Program had 67% URM students.

The number of URM students receiving undergraduate research awards has also steadily increased, with URM students receiving 40% of the awards in 2012. The Ronald E. McNair program, which has been at Fresno State since 1993, has noteworthy success in preparing promising URM students for graduate study. Eighty-five percent of program students are accepted into graduate schools and enroll in the term immediately following the awarding of the undergraduate degree. Seventy percent of them completed the graduate degree and 15% entered a doctoral program, of which 9% received a Ph.D. The number of URM students on the President's and Dean's Lists has also been steadily increasing during the last 5 years, from 33% in fall 2008 to 42% in Fall 2012. In fall 2011, URM students came to represent 23% of students in honorary organizations. Beginning in 2009, the Smittcamp Family Honors College has worked closely with Outreach Services to deliver online application webinars, meet with high school counselors, and attend cultural events (e.g., African American Outreach event) in an effective effort to increase the percentage of URM students in the applicant pool.

Data (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 4.2).

Fresno State's OIE was charged to provide the highest quality research and analytics to support the SSTF and the Graduation Rate Initiative Team (GRIT) in the form of cohort-tracking and retention and graduation rate studies. The Director of the OIE is a member of

both the SSTF and the GRIT, working on a continuous basis to address their data and analysis needs. An OIE senior research analyst drafted for the SSTF the first report on the impact of the high-impact practice of Supplemental Instruction (SI), finding that students who participate regularly in SI achieved a higher mean final course GPA of half to one letter grade higher than those students who do not attend SI (Appendix 5-5).

OIE disaggregates data by student demographic level and various student statuses (e.g., Pell Grant Status, first generation status, URM status, college, major) to be used in making decisions related to targeted interventions of students "at risk," for student advising, and other student support interventions. OIE also provides analytics displaying trends and indicators of students in 1st-year experience programs, athletics, residential housing, learning communities, honors programs, study abroad, service learning, and other programs or practices deemed to be of high impact on student success outcomes.

In addition to retention and graduation rate analysis, OIE provides cohort analysis on course pass/failure rates and GPA, remediation completion rates, upper-division writing completion, and GE completion patterns and rates. Based on OIE research and analysis, these factors tend to be predictors of retention and graduation rate outcomes and time-to-degree (Appendix 5-6).

A 2008 OIE study of postgraduate enrollment found a 2-year average of 35% of undergraduates continue their postgraduate education, of which half enrolled at Fresno State. There was insignificant difference between ethnicities in postgraduate enrollment. Departments with the highest percentage of post-graduate enrollment included Mathematics (70%), Physical Therapy (69%), English (69%), Communicative Disorders (68%), and Liberal Studies (68%). Departments with fewer than 20 graduates were excluded.

Fresno State is also committed to consistently assess and evaluate the needs of students through national surveys such as the National Study on Student Engagement (NSSE). The most recent administration of the NSSE in spring 2011 found student satisfaction at Fresno State to be very good: 85% of first year freshman reported a favorable experience and image of Fresno State while 78% of seniors rated a favorable image of Fresno State. In addition, 85% of freshmen indicated that if they could start their college career over again, they would again choose Fresno State, while 77% of seniors felt the same way. In a more recent campus survey of sophomores and juniors during 2013, the Diverse Learning Environment Survey (DLE, HERI, UCLA, Spring 2013) found 91% of students agree they would recommend Fresno State to others; the survey also found 82% of students felt that faculty at Fresno State believe in their potential to succeed academically.

Moving the needle.

Student success does not result from any one activity, single intervention, or student service. Success is realized by an organized, concerted effort, emanating from a University culture driven to engage students in transformative processes of learning and personal development that leads to successful student outcomes. Fresno State has an encompassing leadership structure and committees (e.g., SSTF, GRIT) that promote and monitor interventions/programs for student success. The organization chart for the Division of Student Affairs identifies more specifically the offices and programs within that division that directly support student academic and personal success (Appendix 5-7). Fresno State was also recognized by the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) with the Most Visible Progress Award Exemplary Program in 2013. This award recognized our outstanding progress in student success for our Graduation Rate Initiative, with particular focus on closing the

achievement gap. A video summary of our strategies for improving student success can be [found here](#).

6: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT: PROGRAM REVIEW; ASSESSMENT; USE OF DATA AND EVIDENCE

Program Review (CFRs 2.7, 2.10, 4.1, 4.3-4.7)

Fresno State has an ongoing and systematic approach to assessment that produces results usable for University decision making. The SOAPS for each program are posted online by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). The year-end report of each program is reviewed by a panel of faculty peers and rated using a University-wide rubric. The ratings are reported back to the program for improving both the SOAP and the annual activities. The results of the annual assessment activities then become a major component of the program review that occurs every seven years.[1]

The annual assessment activities provide programs the opportunity to continuously evaluate student learning and to implement changes in a timely manner when needed. The program review process provides faculty an opportunity to look at the program on a more comprehensive level, including factors in the internal and external environments and integrating outcomes assessment, resources etc. (Appendix 6-1 and section 3).

In addition to the process as described, our quality program improvement efforts are also strengthened by continual interaction with outside constituencies. The University employs both internal and external feedback channels that help identify deficiencies and thereby improve the quality of assessment and program review. One major group of outside constituencies is the professional accrediting agencies that also review student learning outcomes as part of their processes. Currently, 27 programs have external accreditation. Another major group of outside constituencies is the numerous program advisory boards/councils that exist throughout the University. Many programs use their advisory groups to assist in the assessment data collection

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[1] APM 220 states that Program Review will occur every 5-7 years. At this time, programs are scheduled every 7 years.

and analysis and to provide advice on plans for improvement. Feedback from advisory boards or similar outside industry groups are also part of the typical program review (as outlined in APM 220). A final example is in preparation for the WASC review, the University hired an external consultant to review the SOAPs and provide feedback to Academic Affairs, college deans, department chairs, and program assessment coordinators. The external review was performed by Dr. Carol Gittens and completed in Spring 2013. (*SOAP Evaluation and WASC Readiness, May 16, 2013*. Gittens Educational Consulting, Santa Clara, CA.)

A review of the Assessment and Program Review Process (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.6)

The Annual Assessment Process.

A more detailed account of the assessment process at Fresno State is found in Sections 1 and 3. The findings and results from SOAPs are discussed by program faculty members. Any needed changes to the curriculum, instruction, or to the SOAP are to be based on the findings and results. The assessment activity must be supported by the work of the appointed Learning Assessment Team (LAT) and documented and reported each spring in the Annual Report to the Provost. In addition to the Program Assessment Coordinators and the College Assessment Coordinators, the University-wide Assessment of Learning committee oversees assessment activities. These groups facilitate and maximize communications across the campus community regarding the importance of assessment and data needs, gather and provide feedback, and work to raise the overall quality of assessment. Each fall semester the OIE and LAT convene a meeting with the assessment coordinators to discuss how the assessment process is working and where we need to improve. During this meeting, the annual report ratings are reviewed and the results discussed. In appendix 6-2, for example, provides the summary tables presented at the fall

2013 Assessment Coordinators meeting. The summary tables show that among the undergraduate programs, assessment activities, specification and measurement, and addressing "closing the loop" results, are improving. The tables also indicate the unevenness of program progress. The graduate program table displays review ratings for only two years.

The graduate programs are not as advanced in assessment as the undergraduate programs. Even so, the graduate programs are making progress in establishing standards, specifications, measurable indicators, and "closing the loop." In sum, the assessment of learning, as documented in the annual assessment report to the Provost, is evidence of the institutionalized culture of data-driven decision-making at Fresno State.

Emergent Areas and Ideas for Planning Change.

Overall, the SOAPs and assessment processes are robust. The University's commitment to improve instruction and student learning by employing measurable outcomes and evidence is without question. The emergent issues and proposed changes are more about process improvement. The internal and external review of the SOAP and annual assessment processes have resulted in the identification of some deficiencies that stand to be improved. The following deficiencies are called to attention:

1. A continuous challenge is to maintain faculty and Dean interest. While it is common to find among junior faculty a participating interest in assessment, it is also common to find a lack of participating interest among senior, tenured faculty. One apparent reason is that probationary, junior faculty, tend to receive the bulk of assessment committee assignments for the department. The most frequent issue brought to the attention of the LAT and the University-wide Assessment of Learning committee is the need to encourage collaboration between colleges, departments, and program levels and promote

vertical integration of assessment activities. Specifically, a repeated concern was how to involve Deans with assessment, perhaps through some form of positive reinforcement. It was suggested Deans could facilitate regular assessment meetings and encourage cross department/program collaboration. This was partially addressed by the inclusion of the Dean in the University Assessment Committee.

2. Assessment is burdensome to faculty, with full teaching loads to manage and being fully engaged in the retention, tenure and promotion (RTP) process. Some form of incentives or changes in the reward structure may add value to assessment activity. Rewarding faculty (particularly junior faculty) for participating in assessment can be either monetary, time, or other types of awards to make assessment a higher priority (e.g., recognition in the RTP process).

3. Student tracking surveys, alumni surveys, and employer surveys are found to be unevenly applied across the colleges and departments. These approaches—that provide indirect measures—are important surveys for capturing various aspects of student engagement, learning, and satisfaction and their relationship to graduation outcomes. It has also been suggested that additional training should be made available to the assessment coordinators whether in the form of an "Assessment 101" format or individual training. The training could be provided by experienced assessment coordinators while also remaining as a resource to the new or inexperienced coordinators.

4. Small departments lack the capacity to concentrate time and resources on assessment activities. They may be able only to dedicate one faculty member, or the department chair, to perform the annual assessment work. Due to these burdens, meeting timely deadlines is difficult.

Going forward, the next level of improvement (planned changes) could involve a more decentralized structure with a more attentive feedback communications process. This means changing the structure so that ownership of the planning and assessment process is closer to the departments and colleges. An important change would be to improve communications with the departments and colleges. Instead of OIE and the LAT presiding over the colleges together, it is advisable to deploy within each college, a college LAT. In this way the college LAT will have more one-to-one engagement with OIE and the University-wide Assessment Committee regarding SOAP and assessment activities. Second, college learning assessment teams may be organized to work within their own college on sharing best practices and collaborating on SOAP and Assessment activities. This means OIE would be more actively involved "1-1" with each of the college assessment coordinators. It is also important to streamline the assessment activities of accreditation, academic program review, and program assessment, to not overly burden departments and faculty assessment coordinators. In matters where the department is small, OIE could collaborate in a much closer capacity with the department on SOAP and assessment activity.

Policy and Comprehensive Process.

As previously discussed and illustrated in appendix 6-1, the SOAPs and the annual reports of assessment activities provide significant information for use in a more comprehensive evaluation of each academic program. The comprehensive process is referred to as Program Review and is defined in APM 220 (last revised in 2006).

The policy contains detailed instructions regarding the program review process, which is expected to be completed within approximately a two year period. Programs are provided with a template for preparing the self-study and with undergraduate and graduate data packets from

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OIE. The program review process is essentially two-phased: comprehensive analysis of data and other factors influencing the program and identification of the program's strengths and limitations with the development of a plan of action for moving the program forward.

The current APM 220 does not include any provision for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the process used for program review. While APM 220 does state that *a progress report on the items in the action plan will be included in the Department Chair's Annual Report to the Provost*, this information was omitted from the annual reports approximately four years ago. Consequently, the process itself is not periodically evaluated and the follow-through on the action plan that is the final result of the program review process is not happening, either.

Emergent Areas and Analysis.

Though no formal review of the program review process has been undertaken, there are repeated anecdotal observations that have fallen into two categories: process-related observations and program deficiency-related observations. While the process is well-defined, comprehensive and objective, in reality it frequently has 'glitches.' The process-related observations include the following emergent areas:

- Requests for postponement of program review are frequent

- Programs are frequently unable to meet one or more of the deadlines that occur during the two year review process

- Faculty participation in program review, particularly preparation of the self-study, is often limited to only one or two individuals and may or may not include the department chair

- Programs with external program accreditation have been required to complete both processes.

In considering the process-related observations, there are strong sentiments about the current process for program review that could be responsible for what appears to be a lack of faculty buy-in. One of the most frequent sentiments is that the University is continually changing its expectations regarding outcomes assessment, making it impossible to keep up. A second frequently heard sentiment is that the process itself is onerous. This has brought attention to the potential need for a revised process. Such an undertaking would have to be strategically implemented so as to not appear to support the sentiment that the University is continually changing expectations related to assessment and program review. As noted above, there is currently a policy review and potential revision in committee.

Programs with external program accreditation have had to complete both processes: University Program Review and External Accreditation Review. The University has decided to address this issue immediately. As of 2013, programs with external accreditation would have an abbreviated campus review. The new process uses the self-study and site visit report of the external accrediting agency in place of a separate self-study and site visit just for the campus program review. In order to formalize this change, Academic Policy and Planning (AP&P) Committee has been asked to include provisions for an abbreviated process for externally accredited programs in the revisions of APM 220.

The program deficiency-related observations include the following emergent areas:

1. *Lack of standards to compare to outcomes*
2. *Insufficient analysis of data*
3. *Failure to 'close the loop' (e.g., SOAP was revised rather than area improved)*
4. *Weak Action Plans that often focus on faculty numbers and decreasing financial resources*
5. *No follow-up on the Action Plans after approval (particularly in the past four years)*

In considering the program deficiency-related observations, it again appears to suggest that the current processes are not meeting the expected level of ongoing and systematic assessment.

Taken together, the five emergent observations are interrelated. Without the standard for comparing outcomes, it would be expected that the analysis of data would be difficult. Without the standards and sufficient analysis of data, closing the loop would not be effective since the 'conclusions' drawn would lead to inaccurate conclusions (a conclusion that everything is fine when it's not). Without closing the loop, the planning for the future is going to be ineffective since the real status of student learning isn't ever discovered. Lastly, if there is no follow-up on the Action Plan, there is a perception that the work done on program review is not valued. Given this interrelationship, starting at the beginning with programs having clearly identified standards by which student learning outcomes will be compared is critical.

Changes/Planned Changes.

During the 2012-13 academic year, a major revision to APM 220 was submitted to the Academic Senate for consideration. The revisions included the implementation of Outcomes-based Program Review ("Outcomes-Based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices" written by Marilee J. Bresciani and Ralph A. Wolff). The draft policy was designed to better align with the University's strategic planning, WASC standards, and outcomes assessment activities as well as to be more user-friendly. The Academic Senate chose to refer the policy back to the AP&P Committee for further revisions, including more clarity and detail.

As a result of the WASC accreditation self-analysis and recent changes in the accreditation standards, the AP&P Committee has been requested to assure that the revised policy is expanded. Specifically, the revised policy will include the following:

- On-going, systematic assessment of the core competencies;
- Abbreviated process for externally accredited programs; and

- Provisions for periodic, systematic review of the effectiveness of the program review process.

Based on the agenda for the AP&P Committee, it is expected that a revised policy will ready for Academic Senate consideration in Fall 2014.

Use of Data and Evidence (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7)

The culture of evidence drives assessment at Fresno State: it is a known certainty among leadership and the academic community. The SOAP, the Annual Assessment Report to the Provost, and Academic Program Review, are all ongoing processes that underscore our evidence-based research assessment. Fresno State's OIE provides the data analytics, research, and reports, made widely available through a new dashboard indicator project (tableau), that give full value to our data-driven decision-making model. Moreover, Fresno State believes student and program assessment should be a continuous activity. To this end, OIE tracks and monitors the progress of student cohorts—including that of many student subgroups—to understand why and when some student groups may need various targeted interventions and support services (*also see* OIE activities, data and research).

OIE's other normal functions include external reporting and complying with internal data requests, and an emphasis on delivery of all services across the campus. Additional OIE services includes consulting with faculty, staff, and managers on formulating goals and objectives, data analysis, research and assessment methods, instrument design, planning and process design, and establishing benchmarks, performance indicators, and learning outcomes. OIE maintains a University-wide license for the Qualtrics Survey Research Suite. Qualtrics is an online web-based suite of tools from which OIE provides support in the areas of survey design, formatting, and administration, and survey data analysis. Lastly, after several years of development, OIE

launched the University's dashboard indicator project, which represented a major change in

direction from providing hard copy publications and static website information displays of data

tables, charts, and figures to a web-based interactive data access system via the data visualization

dashboards and tools supported by the Tableau software platform. The dashboard indicator

system is currently in deployment to internal campus users. As planned, in the future a dashboard

site for public access displaying aggregate and tabular level information will be delivered.

7. SUSTAINABILITY: FINANCIAL VIABILITY; PREPARING FOR THE CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the current status of the University and addresses two elements of sustainability: fiscal sustainability-in terms of both adequacy of financial resources and their alignment with University priorities; and the University's capacity to identify and respond to changes in the higher education landscape.

Sustainability (CFRs 1.7, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7- 3.10, 4.3, 4.5-4.7)

Administration.

As one of 23 campuses of the California State University system, Fresno State is a publicly supported institution that recently celebrated its 100th year. The governance structure of the CSU is largely determined by state law. The CSU is ultimately administered by the 25 member Board of Trustees of the California State University. The Trustees appoint the Chancellor of the CSU, (the chief executive officer of the system), as well as the Presidents of each campus (Appendix 7.1 shows the University Organizational Chart) .

Sustainability at Fresno State is viewable in the smooth campus transition to a new leadership team as the new President, a new Provost (the former assumed the presidency at another CSU campus), and two other new vice presidents came on board. Shared governance is a hallmark of the institution, and the Academic Senate is actively involved in the life of the campus (*see* appendix 7.2 for its organization). The Senate's Executive Committee work includes the President and the Provost. Recruitment and hiring processes are effectively managed by and backed-up with orientation programs and evaluation practices that are aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives. On-going staff development efforts provide

opportunities for learning and growth Faculty development is handled through the Center for the Scholarly Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CSALT) and Technology Innovations for Teaching and Learning (TILT). Faculty evaluation processes are systematic with well-defined policies and procedures. Templates are available for new tenure track faculty to follow in preparing documentation of their effectiveness. Faculty involvement in program review is expected to expand with the full roll out of eportfolios in Spring 2015. At the graduate level, each graduate program has a cohort of graduate faculty sufficient to support the program. Since the last accreditation visit, the University has established OIE, and the discussion of its role in previous sections indicates the extent to which its work has been integrated into the institutional culture. The strong data-based process that informs the efforts of the SSTF and GRIT can serve to illustrate how the integration of OIE with institutional priorities supports sustainability in the critical area of aligning financial resources with academic priorities.

The campus uses a strategic planning process that annually updates a strategic plan and periodically (about every 5-7 years) develops a major revision. The Strategic Planning committee chaired by the President convenes each year to receive reports on strategic initiatives and determine next steps. The campus has engaged in an extensive campus master planning process over the last few years and has identified significant capital expenditure needs and a method to meet those needs in the coming years. As an open access institution, admissions management rather than enrollment management has been the focus of planning efforts and the campus has a history of meeting its enrollment targets. A new Information Technology plan was developed in 2012-2013. The campus uses a Senior Technology Leadership Team (vice presidents) and a more broadly based (faculty, staff, students, and administration) Information

and Education Technology Coordinating Committee chaired by the President to manage information technology.

Fiscal Sustainability-Adequacy.

As a public institution, Fresno State has had to navigate through state budget problems over the last three decades including the severe economic challenges of 2009 to 2012. The level of public support has changed significantly since the last accreditation self-study. The State of California was funding 78% of the General Fund Budget in Fiscal 2002-03; the State now funds 48% of the General Fund Budget, with the difference coming from increased student tuition and fees. The General Fund Budget grew from $162.3M in FY 2002-03 to $215.5M in FY 2012-13, but the State Appropriation went from $127.7M in FY 2002-03 down to $88.0M in FY 2012-13. To compensate, student tuition and fees grew from $34.6M in FY 2002-03 to $108.4M in FY 2012-13. In 2003-2004, full-time undergraduate students paid $970 per semester. In 2013-2014, they pay $3,144 per semester—an increase of 245%. Financial aid has buffered the impact on students and their families but those without access to such aid have struggled. The governor has made it clear that he does not expect to see increases in tuition/fees in the near future and has proposed some modest increase in state funding for the next few years. Even with the increase, tuition/fees remain 20% below the national average for public four-year institutions.

To mitigate both the reduction in state support and the increases in tuition/fees, Fresno State faculty and administrators bring in an average of $35 million annually through grant and contract activity. Fresno State faculty and administrators have been particulary aggressive in the pursuit of external funding in support of at risk populations. In FY 2013-14, 113 of the 281 funded grants and contracts projects were devoted to the needs of disadvantaged groups, representing $13.8M or 38.2% of all award dollars at Fresno State. This demonstrates the

leadership role that Fresno State plays in the region with respect to vulnerable populations. Projects included efforts to support of students at risk of dropping out, to improve outcomes for groups recognized as vulnerable to health or healthcare disparities, and the needs of the economically disadvantaged. The campus also completed a multiyear capital campaign in 2013 during an economic trough—surpassing its $200M goal by $14M.

Fiscal Sustainability-Alignment.

Aligning resources to priorities occurs at institution, division, college/school, and department levels. The campus has a well-defined decentralized budget process. Benefits, risk management, utilities, and a reserve are managed centrally. The President retains some dollars at this level to support Strategic Plan initiatives. There is an annual distribution of dollars to projects in support of the Strategic Plan, and these are reviewed each year. A "level A" distribution provides funding to each of the divisions. Vice presidents are expected to address division-level priorities in accordance with their plans. The University Budget committee provides the President with an avenue to seek input on level A budgeting decisions, and a review of the budgeting process was conducted most recently in 2013. In Academic Affairs, a "level B" allocation accomplished by formula was revised this past year. Each of the schools/colleges is provided an allocation based on the number of students taught, the mode and level of instruction, support costs, and other key variables. Deans have the authority and responsibility to align spending in their area with their plans consistent with the Academic and University Strategic plans. Additionally, a cohort program hired faculty who would work in one of five cohorts focusing on priority areas determined by the provost and the deans: Urban and Regional Transformation; World and Global Cultures; Health; Water Technology, Management and

Quality; and Multiculturalism in the United States (websites for the last two are under development).

Conservative financial management has protected the campus' endowment. The campus is audited as part of the California State University system, with an unqualified independent financial audit in 2011. It has been a leader among the CSUs in initiatives to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative functions such as the Common Management System (CMS), the Common Human Resource System (CHRS), the Common Financial System (CFS), and the deployment of Assetworks AiM and FAMS. AssetWorks AiM is software deployed at Fresno State to improve the bottom line through better use of campus space and facilities resources. Fresno State negotiated with the provider so that other CSU campuses can adopt it cost effectively under our "umbrella" license. FAMS is the Fleet Administrative Management System developed by the campus to meet a State Department of General Services (DGS) mandate for better accountability. DGS gave the CSU nine months to figure out its own process or have DGS take it over. The campus Facilities Management team used $100,000 in developmental costs to produce a "plug and play" template that can also be used by all 23 campuses and can result in system-wide savings. The University pays close attention to technical change—a recent IT reorganization consolidated services and staff and reduced costs ($2.3 million) yet maintained service levels.

Identifying and Responding to Changes in Higher Education (1.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7)

It is our vision that "*California State University, Fresno will become nationally recognized for education that transforms students and improves the quality of life in the region and beyond; for leadership that drives economic, infrastructure, and human development; and*

for institutional responsiveness that fosters creativity, generates opportunity for all, and thrives on change. Drawing from the rich human diversity of experiences, values, world views, and cultures that make up the fabric of the Central Valley, we will power the New California through the 21st century" ([Strategic Plan for Excellence IV (2011-2015](#)). Implicit in this vision is the ability to recognize and adapt to changes in the higher education landscape. University leaders are actively involved in and have served as leaders of national organizations that position them to monitor such changes, such as the Association of Public and Land Gant Universities; Coalition of Metropolitan and Urban Universities; American Association of State Colleges and Universities; Association of American Colleges and Universities; National Association of College and University Business Officers; and the National Academic Advising Association.

The possible direction of future change is discussed in various venues. The reduction in state support and the increased tuition burden on students looms large in planning for the future. Changes in the role of technology in higher education are monitored and discussed by the president's Information and Educational Technology Coordinating Committee. A cross-division enrollment management committee considers the changing demographics of the service area and likely impact on outreach efforts, applications, and admissions. Faculty learning communities form to explore new pedagogies such as flipped classrooms, tablets, and eportfolios. The President's task force on internationalization considers recruitment of international students as well as study abroad. As part of the CSU, the campus responds to legislative mandates such as SB 1440 to improve the transfer process through the Transfer Model Curriculum effort and participates in programs to improve the quality of entering students (e.g., Early Assessment Program, Early Start Program). In the following paragraphs, three changes—Access, Accountability, Accommodation—are singled out for attention. As noted above, the state of

California has transferred a significant portion of the cost of college to the student. Hence, the issue of access is a significant concern. A second major trend is the greater emphasis at both the federal and state levels on accountability. This requires the campus be able to demonstrate its impact not only on the students it serves but also on the community, region, and state. A third major factor is the accommodation of students' preparation and the skill set they bring to the campus. The move to Common Core promises to change the academic preparation of incoming students. Additionally, the level of their technological acumen is changing. The campus will need to continue to upgrade and adapt its technological infrastructure and faculty will need to respond with different pedagogies.

Access.

The campus has been engaged in several strategies to maintain access. The highly successful $200 million capital campaign engaged the community in understanding the financial needs of the campus. An extensive outreach program to high schools and the community attempts to educate parents and students on the benefits of a higher education and help them recognize its value. Faculty and administrators work closely with their K-14 colleagues to know of changes that will impact the University. The University also takes a proactive approach to reducing the cost of higher education, pursuing fiscal innovations that support student access. For example, the Auxiliary Corporations has been proactive in providing less expensive alternatives to the traditional textbook. The primary strategy to date has been to stay on the forefront of the shift toward textbook rentals, with a plan to increase the offering of textbook rentals to 600+ within a few semesters, saving the student up to 70% off the new book prices. The campus secured a grant from the CSU Chancellor's Office to participate in the system-wide Affordable Learning Solutions (AL$) program to further reduce student costs. Finally, the

University sees itself as a place of opportunity for those groups not served effectively by public higher education in the past. To boost access, the University developed [ASPIRE—A Strategic Plan for Inclusion, Respect, and Equity](#) which provides a blueprint to infuse diversity in the classroom so students can see themselves reflected in the faculty and the course content. Implementing ASPIRE will increase outreach, enhance knowledge, and build capacity about diversity, inclusion, respect, and equity throughout all levels of the University to create a culture that is welcoming to all students across their experiences.

Accountability.

In order to demonstrate its impact on not only the students it serves but also the community, region, and state, the campus participates in the [Voluntary System of Accountability](#), and each year students participate in the [Collegiate Learning Assessment](#). Perhaps the tool that might have the largest impact is just now being rolled out—eportfolios. An eportfolio platform is anticipated to facilitate demonstration of the achievement of desired learning outcomes and to provide a mechanism to implement a 21st century pedagogy. It is anticipated to achieve these results:

1. *Improve student success by helping students:*
    a. *Align their work/effort with desired learning outcomes*
    b. *Become self-directed learners;*
    c. *Develop an integrative perspective of their university career;*
    d. *Deepen learning;*
    e. *Present themselves digitally; and*
    f. *Enjoy the creative process of learning.*
2. *Provide students with a tool to showcase their knowledge, skills and abilities for employers, graduate schools, and others.*
3. *Enhance coherence to the GE program.*
4. *Showcase the value of education to students, parents, employers, and the community.*
5. *Enhance University engagement with the community and improve reporting the impact of the University on the region.*
6. *Improve the infrastructure for assessment and accreditation.*
7. *Lead faculty to develop e-books as affordable learning solutions.*

Accountability is also being addressed through the strengthening of program review and outcomes assessment efforts described earlier in this document.

Accommodation.

Students enrolling at the University will be prepared differently as the state moves to the Common Core. Additionally, the expectations of these students will be different, reflecting pedagogical changes they have seen in K-12. For example, several of the local school districts are moving quickly into the use of tablets in the classroom. As the campus employs new faculty and staff, it is looking for 21st century skills that will assist the University to remain current and address both anticipated challenges and the changing nature of students and their abilities. For existing faculty and staff, professional development will be needed. The University is seeking to recruit and retain instructional designers, student affairs professionals with understanding of high impact practices, and faculty with expertise in the use of cutting edge technologies to assist in this effort. Similarly, the acquisition of technology tools facilitating early warning systems, dashboards, bandwidth, and online capacity (e.g., lecture capture, video creation, editing) contribute to this end.

8. CONCLUSION: REFLECTION AND PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

This is an exciting time for Fresno State: with a new President completing his first year and three of four vice presidents coming on board this year, there is an atmosphere of change and innovation on campus. The University will begin its regular process of strategic planning in the next academic year and the vision of the new administration will surely be reflected in the new plan. President Castro has already made clear his charge to faculty, staff and students to "Be Bold!". In addition, to promote a culture of respect and civility, he recently added to the charge, "Be Nice!".

The University has been successful in establishing a clear structure for assessment of student learning with regular review, reporting, and feedback mechanisms to departments. We have also developed a strong focus on student success, including the expansion of student support services and an ongoing commitment to improving learning as well as a graduation and retention rates. This focus will continue and include new efforts such as the recently funded NSF "FLOCK" project in the College of Science and Mathematics that seeks to improve student success and retention in the STEM majors through a redesign of the introductory course sequences in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. We are also very excited about our new data dashboards which put information on admissions, retention, graduation and course performance into the hands of faculty and administrators. This tool will provide local data to assist with guiding our evidenced-based decision-making processes.

The University has shown a strong commitment to strategic planning and its policies and procedures align well with WASC standards. We continue to demonstrate a strong and increasing commitment to diversity and inclusion on our campus.

Looking forward, several of the challenges we face revolve around the recent changes to the WASC handbook. In the requirements for defining the meaning, quality and integrity of the degree, we have made significant progress in defining institutional learning outcomes. We have also adopted a platform for eportfolios that we plan to use to assess these ILOs. Our foremost challenge will be the implementation of an eportfolio system campus-wide. There are few examples nationally of large institutions adopting eportfolios on such an extensive scale and we are cognizant of the challenges that this will bring.   While posing a significant challenge, we believe that the benefits to student learning and the improvements in our ability to provide evidence for that learning will be worth the challenge. We also face significant work ahead defining and assessing the meaning, quality and integrity of our graduate degrees, which we will be intensifying during the coming academic year.

The requirement for providing evidence regarding attainment of the five core competencies at a point near graduation will also represent a challenge for us. We still need to clearly define the structure and mechanism for this assessment as well as standards of performance. The University did well in assessing the core competency of writing and is moving forward with a plan for assessing critical thinking in the coming academic year. These efforts have been a learning experience for us and will help shape and improve our strategies for assessing the remaining core competencies.

Our policies and procedures for program review need to be updated to help not only streamline the process. Our goal is to ensure action plans have meaningful follow-through, and incorporate the core competencies and our institutional learning outcomes into the process.

The University will also need to strengthen its efforts to provide professional development opportunities for our faculty. Although significant support for our faculty has been offered, we recognize that more could be done, particularly for part time faculty.

With a new President and several new leaders at the executive level, the campus community has a renewed energy to tackle the challenges that lie ahead. We are united in our commitment to student success for all students and energized by the potential for the effective use of technologies such as tablets and eportfolios to help us achieve that success. As the state budget improves and funding to the CSU is restored, we are confident our campus can meet the challenges ahead to continue to transform the lives of our students in California's Central Valley.