

Roles and Purposes Dimension Feedback California State University-San Marcos

Dear Jeffrey, Geoffrey, Timothy, Ann, Ronald, Vicki, Jan, Terri, Sara, Darci, and Wayne,

I have read your excellent report on the Roles and Purposes dimension and want to offer the following comments and questions for your consideration. First, I appreciate your attention to organizing the report so that it is easy to understand and follow. You present solid information that CSUSM is performing well on this particular dimension. You do note a few areas where the campus could improve – helping students examine their personal reasons for getting a college education – for example.

I was intrigued by the student focus group observation that personal growth could happen as a result of involvement in campus organizations. I hadn't made this explicit connection before, and think that your students are absolutely right. I guess my continuing question is whether students actually value "personal growth" as an outcome of college and whether faculty and staff engage students in a discussion of why personal growth is important.

Another telling survey response was the faculty/staff perception that the University doesn't courage "betterment of society" to be a goal for the first year. Was the American Democracy Project "under the radar" for faculty? How about the other efforts you cite in this area? I wonder, as you do, why faculty aren't more aware of what's going on in the arena of civic engagement.

You obviously do a great job of giving your students roadmaps to course requirements but you note the need to give students the "why," not just the "what." This is generally considered the responsibility of advisors, although faculty who teach core first-year courses can also play a role in helping students understand the rationale for core general education or first-year courses.

You share with many other campuses the issue of involving commuters more effectively in campus life. And of course, the issue is compounded by the number of first-generation students who may feel marginal and disconnected although, as you note, their academic skills are at least equal to those of other students.

I agree with your recommendations and with your summary grade. I would offer only one word of warning. If you require the GEL 101 course, you need to be prepared for "push-back" from students. You will also need to make sure you can attract enough student-centered faculty to teach the number of sections you will need.

You have done a terrific job of providing evidence to support your conclusions and recommendations. This report will be very useful to the Steering Committee and the larger university. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions about my comments.

Best wishes,

Betsy

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