PREAMBLE/CONTEXT FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING AT CSUSM

When founded in 1989 as the 20th campus in the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system, California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) held the unique distinction of being the first comprehensive public university to be established in the United States in over two decades. Over 30 years later, CSUSM is still the only public four-year comprehensive university serving North San Diego, Southwest Riverside and South Orange counties, cementing its role and reputation as a community-engaged institution of place. Additionally, CSUSM serves 19 tribal communities and tribal governments. With over 16,000 students, the university has long played a vital role in strengthening the economic, cultural and community life of its region while also magnifying opportunities for social mobility not only for individuals but entire families.

CSUSM is committed to inclusive excellence, social justice, educational access, and social mobility via an affordable, quality academic and student experience. A Hispanic Serving Institution, about half of CSUSM students are underrepresented minorities, and 54% of graduates are the first in their families to earn a bachelor’s degree. In addition, the university is home to the highest per capita number of American Indian students in the California State University system as well as the highest number per capita of military-affiliated students. Of CSUSM’s over 50,000 alumni, approximately 80% stay in the region after graduation, fueling impressive economic growth in the region and state. A new economic impact study commissioned by the CSU reported that for every dollar invested by the state in CSUSM, $8.45 in statewide industry activity is generated. When the impact of the enhanced earnings of CSUSM alumni is factored in, the figure is even greater – $24.78 in total economic activity for every dollar invested – demonstrating the multiplier effect that each dollar of spending by CSUSM and its students has on the state.

This plan comes following a period of immense uncertainty and upheaval, including the COVID-19 pandemic and a long-overdue national conversation about racial justice and equity. Notwithstanding recent challenges, CSUSM is youthful and enterprising with an unrivaled track record of success. Now, with President Ellen Neufeldt at the helm – a nationally recognized higher education leader who is passionate about helping students persist and graduate – CSUSM is refocusing and recommitting to address the many complex issues confronting the educational needs of its students and region. With an eye on the next thirty years, President Neufeldt is committed to building on CSUSM’s position as a regional higher education anchor institution and vehicle of student social mobility, while ensuring the university is well poised for continued growth and innovation in the years to come.
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Luiseño/Payómkawichum people. Today, the meeting place of CSUSM and its surrounding areas is still home to the six federally recognized bands of the La Jolla, Pala, Pauma, Pechanga, Rincon, Soboba Luiseño/Payómkawichum people. It is also important to acknowledge that this land remains the shared space among the Kuupang-gaxwichem/Cupeño and Kumeyaay and Ipai peoples.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Ranjeeta Basu, Interim Chief Diversity Officer (Co-Chair)

Carl Kemnitz, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs (Co-Chair)

Fredi Avalos, Lecturer, Department of Communication (EPAG Rep)

William Byun, Lecturer, Finance (Lecturer Rep)

Dylan Crivello, 2020-2021 ASI Chair and Chief of Staff (ASI Student Rep)

Charles De Leone, Interim Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (Undergraduate Research Rep)

LaPorcha Ellick, Coordinator of Student Involvement (Faculty/Staff Association Rep)

Janelle Esprit (Office of Inclusive Excellence Student Rep)

Geoffrey Gilmore, AVP, Student Academic Support Services, Student Affairs (SS&R Rep)

Sharon Hamill, Academic Senate Chair & Professor of Psychology

Cheryl Landin, Student Success & Equity Analyst, Institutional Planning & Analysis (Staff Rep)

Penny Lanese, Identity Management Account Technician, IITS (Staff Rep)

Lauren Magnuson, Head of Library Collections Management and Tech Services (Library Rep)

Alan Styles, Department Chair & Professor, Accounting (Faculty Rep)

John Tippeconnic, Lecturer, CHABSS American Indian Studies (Inclusive Excellence Advisory Council Rep)

Manuel Vargas, Professor of Education (UCC Rep)

Rika Yoshii, Professor, Computer Science, and Information Systems (Faculty Rep) Ex-Officio Support

Margaret Chantung – Chief Communications Officer, University Communications

Regina Eisenbach – Dean, Academic Programs

Lisa Medina – Director of Admissions & University Registrar

Mark Norita – Associate Vice President, Facilities Development and Management

Patricia Prado-Olmos – Chief Community Engagement Officer

Sarah Villarreal – Chief of Staff, Office of the President Administrative Support

Jessica Halsey, Operations Coordinator, Office of the President

Melinda Jones, Executive Aide, Community Relations University Engagement

Lucero Ordonez, Operations Coordinator, Office of the President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As California State University San Marcos reaches higher levels in all aspects of inclusive excellence, we recognize that our people are key to propelling our exceptional academic institution and community to greater levels of success. CSUSM appreciates the engagement and leadership of the Strategic Planning Committee with special thanks to the committee’s co-chairs Dr. Carl Kemnitz, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Ranjeeta Basu, interim chief diversity officer.
METHODOLOGY

CSUSM embarked upon a comprehensive process to develop a new strategic plan. In collaboration with MGT Consulting Group, the process was designed to engage stakeholders in a variety of avenues to collect insight, feedback, and priorities to advance the University and build on a successful foundation. A key first step in the approach was an initial meeting with President Neufeldt and the Strategic Planning Committee co-chairs to clarify and confirm expected outcomes and the process for moving forward. The initial meeting focused on project expectations and desired strategic planning process outcomes.

Project Initiation

Project priorities, in unranked order, included a focus on:

• Creating a strategic plan that is a living document used to guide decision making and progress assessment;
• Defining student success;
• Strengthening social mobility and national reputation for equity and inclusion;
• Responsiveness to a changing higher education environment, particularly focused on COVID-19 as an accelerant for responding, adapting, and capturing the lessons learned from the pandemic;
• Determining opportunities for growth in enrollments and academic planning;
• Identifying and differentiating the University through stewardship, integrity, and social responsibility while facing big challenges and stepping up to meet those challenges;
• As a community-engaged anchor institution of our region, build on CSUSM’s legacy as a university of place;
• Long-term sustainability to innovate and grow;
• Continuing to build a distinctive campus identity and reputation;
• Most importantly, engage all members of the university community in the process.

Stakeholder Engagement

Listening and Learning Tour: President Neufeldt conducted a Listening and Learning tour as one of her first presidential priorities in 2019 to learn about the needs of the CSUSM community. This tour included nearly 200 events such as open forums with students, faculty, staff, and administrators, meetings with community partners and elected officials, athletic events, community events, and more. At each event, information was gathered about the needs and expectations of University stakeholders.

Focus Groups: MGT representatives conducted eight virtual focus groups between November 16, 2020 and March 29, 2021 with approximately 100 participants. The seven focus groups were held with a variety of groups to gather insight including: CSUSM Strategic Planning Committee, University Cabinet, University Council, Foundation Board, Senior Managers, Student Success and Retention Committee, Employee Care Stakeholders, Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, and Associated Students, Inc. Focus groups were scheduled for an hour and MGT used Zoom, Polleverywhere, video, audio, and chat to engage stakeholders and capture feedback and insight on CSUSM’s Strategic Plan. Two additional focus groups were facilitated by some members of the steering committee with community leaders of social justice grassroots organizations.

Interviews: CSUSM provided a list of key stakeholders and MGT worked with CSUSM to develop and approve an interview guide. MGT conducted one-on-one interviews via Microsoft Teams and completed 17 interviews between January 29 and March 31, 2021. Interviewees included donors, staff members, faculty, local government officials, community association leaders, alumni, community college leaders, industry leaders, and students. Through individual interviews, MGT captured insight on goals for the new strategic plan; thoughts on how to define student success; social mobility and innovation success; the greatest strength of the Univer-
Survey: MGT worked with CSUSM to design a web-based survey for faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members using Qualtrics. The purpose of the survey was to collect respondents’ demographic information, information on the campus’ greatest strengths, greatest challenges, priority areas of focus, thoughts on defining student success, and top elements for the new strategic plan. To notify potential respondents, CSUSM sent an e-mail message to the campus community inviting them to respond. The survey was available to faculty, staff, and students from February 11, 2021 until February 25, 2021. With 1,678 total responses from a distribution list of approximately 21,100, the survey achieved an approximate 7.9% response rate. The full distribution list was inclusive of students who may no longer be enrolled on campus or transient students who are unlikely to engage, lowering the response rate.

Alumni, community members, Native Advisory Council, and other external members of the CSUSM community were provided the same survey but permitted an extended period of time to participate, with the survey window open from February 11, 2021 through March 29, 2021. Potential respondents were invited by e-mail message by the campus, through the Alumni Association, and through the Native Advisory Council. A total of 340 responses were obtained.

Town Halls: President Neufeldt hosted a Town Hall on February 2, 2021 to kick off the strategic planning process. CSUSM provided notes from those engagements and MGT summarized responses in this report. MGT also conducted a second Town Hall on Feb. 26th, 2021 to validate, verify, and extend information collected from the interviews. The discussion focused on defining student success, the mission, the vision, and the campus climate statement. MGT collected input through Poll Everywhere, note taking, and chat box responses.

World Cafés: On two occasions, the World Café process brought people together around questions that matter to CSUSM. The methodology can be described as strategic dialogue. Together, in conversation participants collectively weaved a vision for how to serve students and the region over the next five to ten years. The World Cafes confirmed prior insight and extended the opportunity for stakeholders to clarify thoughts and priorities surrounding the strategic plan.

Website Input: CSUSM also collected feedback through a website to offer an additional avenue for stakeholders to participate in the strategic planning process.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee: The committee met in spring and summer 2021 to facilitate opportunities for broad campus input, distill feedback and develop the draft strategic plan document.
OUR MISSION

At California State University San Marcos, our mission is student success. Our welcoming community of teacher scholars and staff holistically advance the social, professional and personal development of students across the student life cycle, through innovation, education and community partnerships. Our exemplary academic programs respond to societal needs while preparing graduates to be tomorrow’s socially just leaders and changemakers.

OUR VISION

California State University San Marcos will be a national leader of social mobility, transforming lives, families and communities. As the first-choice university for first generation students and future generations, we will drive intellectual engagement, innovation, and sustainability for a diverse, global society. We will prepare graduates who are socially just leaders and changemakers of tomorrow.

OUR VALUES

• Intellectual Engagement
• Student Success
• Inclusive Excellence
• Culture of Care
• Innovation
• Community Engagement
• Stewardship of Resources

OUR GOALS

The following strategic goals are part of a living document that will guide CSUSM as we move forward into the next phase of our institutional journey. To ensure continued momentum, these goals are interconnected in nature and will rely on qualitative and quantitative data and evidence to inform decisions and strategies, as well as assess success.
GOAL 1: ACHIEVING OUR VISION THROUGH ACADEMIC & RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

At the heart of CSUSM is an academic mission that facilitates social mobility, intellectual engagement and community development through dedicated teacher-scholars, innovative programs, and inclusive excellence in a liberal arts education framework.

Objectives

1.1 Engage all students in their learning through inclusive, relevant, and innovative teaching.

1.2 Design and deliver curricula to meet students where they are, ensuring timely access and clear pathways to successful careers.

1.3 Develop new academic programs that are responsive to regional and global needs.

1.4 Ensure that all students meet learning outcomes that promote social mobility.

1.5 Support and intellectually engage a community of teacher-scholars with research, scholarship and creative activities of increasing impact and service to our region and world.

1.6 Expand research and grant activities that push the boundaries of knowledge, solve critical issues and strengthen communities.

1.7 Invest in hiring, retention and development of tenure-track faculty.

1.8 Support our dedicated staff and faculty who serve our diverse student body.
GOAL 2: ACHIEVING OUR VISION THROUGH STUDENT SUCCESS

Students are the center of our mission and success. We work together to create a proactive, seamless, student-ready learning environment that meets students where they are and prepares them to be the socially just leaders and change makers of tomorrow.

Objectives

2.1 Ensure a seamless, equitable student lifecycle from first point of contact through graduation and beyond.

2.2 Remove institutional barriers to student success and assure equitable opportunities and outcomes.

2.3 Leverage comprehensive data and predictive analytics models to align resources and programs that are tailored to support students where they are.

2.4 Ensure every student has the opportunity to participate in hands-on, engaged learning, high impact, career activating practices, including those based in and supportive of the community.

2.5 Connect into family ecosystems and support the inter-generational impact of higher education.

2.6 Create a coordinated communication plan to meet students where they are.

2.7 Provide a comprehensive and proactive support system for students to meet their academic and lifelong goals.

2.8 Expand proactive, comprehensive and inclusive mental health support services.
GOAL 3: ACHIEVING OUR VISION THROUGH DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

We commit to every student - especially those who are from historically underserved communities - that they are welcome here, belong here, and will succeed here in this rigorous and challenging academic environment. Together, we dismantle systemic barriers in ways that nurture the wellbeing of all members of our campus community.

Objectives

3.1 Recruit and retain a diverse community of teacher-scholars, staff and administrators who will serve as role models for our diverse student body and have a commitment to the academic success of our students.

3.2 Address the diverse needs of our students by providing tailored support services, resources and inclusive curriculum that meet and celebrate them where they are.

3.3 Promote a learning and working environment where all members of the campus community can thrive and feel heard, respected and valued.

3.4 Commit individually and collectively to shared values of institutional equity, social justice, inclusion and care.

3.5 As a minority serving institution, institutionalize and highlight supportive initiatives for underserved and historically excluded student populations.

3.6 Apply the power of our diversity to create unique solutions and innovations, while engaging the campus and community in creating a more inclusively sustainable future.
GOAL 4: ACHIEVING OUR VISION THROUGH OUR CULTURE OF CARE

We collectively create and sustain a culture of care that prioritizes student success as well as the intellectual, emotional, physical and social well-being of all members of our campus community.

Objectives

4.1 Promote a caring, collaborative and respectful learning and working environment where all members of the campus community can thrive and feel heard, respected and valued.

4.2 Commit individually and collectively to values of transparent, caring, respectful and empathetic communication and interaction with one another.

4.3 Foster our mission through stewardship of our human, physical and financial resources through a lens of care, accountability, integrity and maintaining the public trust.

4.4 Welcome and onboard new hires, supporting their contributions to CSUSM and developing their potential/capacity for advancement.

4.5 At every point in the student life cycle, ensure that communications, processes and policies are designed to support student success and enhance the student experience.

4.6 Create a humanized culture of service that focuses on the experience of the “customer” (i.e. student, employee, parent, community member, etc.) rather than on the transaction, process or policy.
GOAL 5: ACHIEVING OUR VISION THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

As an anchor institution and Carnegie classified community engaged university, we engage in mutually beneficial partnerships to achieve our educational mission and serve our regional communities. We embrace our role as a driver of regional economic development and an intellectual and cultural resource through partnerships that help improve quality of life, protect our environment, make our community stronger and support a sustainable future for generations to come.

Objectives

5.1 Collaborate with community partners to innovate and address real-world challenges and create sustainable social change.

5.2 Collaborate with community partners to achieve inclusive growth and economic development.

5.3 Partner with community to provide relevant and engaged learning, research and service opportunities.

5.4 Develop a strong pipeline of philanthropic support and for CSUSM amongst regional, state and national stakeholders.

5.5 Serve as a university of place and a destination for athletic, intellectual, and cultural enrichment that is mutually supportive.

5.6 Strengthen connections to the diverse and distinctive communities of our region to advance partnerships, access and success.
GOAL 6: ACHIEVING OUR VISION THROUGH OUR DISTINCTIVE INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AND REPUTATION

As a nationally recognized community of scholars, teachers, researchers, innovators and trailblazers, we tell our success stories to deepen our relationships and increase engagement and support of our university and its strategic priorities.

Objectives

6.1 Establish CSUSM’s reputation as a national leader in social mobility through our commitment to academic excellence, student success, inclusive excellence, innovation, community engagement, sustainability and stewardship of resources as the foundation of the University’s reputation and identity.

6.2 Prepare for and launch a new comprehensive philanthropic campaign that educates, engages, and inspires constituents about our new vision while further developing a culture of philanthropy.

6.3 Cultivate pride among internal constituents (current students, faculty, staff and administrators) through a shared understanding and experience of CSUSM’s identity, culture, values and traditions.

6.4 Expand CSUSM’s influence and effectiveness through strong, mutually beneficial community partnerships that enhance student learning, spur economic development, meet community needs, and/or enhance revenue/philanthropy.

6.5 Strengthen and align CSUSM’s approach to university-employer/industry, elected officials, alumni, parent and friend engagement.

6.6 Raise our institutional profile through select program accreditation and national program/university rankings, media placements, and prestigious national and international recognitions.
DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement: As a regional anchor institution, community engagement is a commitment to building a stronger and more vibrant region by connecting the University to surrounding communities in mutually beneficial ways. A strategic process whereby we build and sustain relationships with industry sectors, community organizations and individuals that support student learning, university development, faculty research while also addressing community-based issues that impact the well-being of our partners.

Culture of Care: Creating a culture of care means demonstrating through kind and thoughtful actions that we genuinely care for the wellbeing of others. It means that we treat people in ways that honor and affirm their humanity and unique lived experiences. It means creating an environment where people feel like they matter and are inspired to be the best that they can be. It means that we always keep the wellbeing of our internal and external campus community in mind when we design policies and processes, holding each other accountable.

Diverse Communities: CSUSM embraces the rich diversity of its campus community and values the broad academic, social and community benefits that arise from a university committed to equity and inclusion. The excellence we seek emerges from the contributions and talents of every member of our university, including those who identify in one or more of the following ways:
• American Indian and Alaskan Native
• Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American (APIDA)
• Black
• First generation
• Former foster youth
• Formerly incarcerated individuals
• International
• Latinx
• LGBTQIA+
• Low income
• Persons with disabilities
• Religious/spiritual
• Undocumented/DREAMers
• Veterans and active-duty military/families

High Impact Practices: A specific set of educational practices linked to various positive undergraduate learning effects, including persistence and retention (Kuh, 2008). Coined “high-impact practices” (HIPs), the activities include first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects.

Innovation: The process of finding and implementing novel solutions that address societal needs. Innovation at CSUSM is collaborative and takes place in partnership with students, faculty, and community members. It is situated at the intersection of diversity, inclusion and student success, with a focus on enriching the intellectual, civic, economic, and cultural life of our region.

Intellectual Engagement: Exploration and imagination are the primary means through which human beings make sense of their world. Intellectual engagement includes knowledge and skill acquisition but goes far beyond that. It is about empowering students to find critical ways to consciously make meaning of their lives and the complex ever-changing world around them. It is about approaching the world of ideas with curiosity and wonder and being open to the possibility of developing a lifelong passion. It is about having the courage to imagine a better world and taking responsibility for making it a reality through creative problem-solving and innovative applications of new knowledge.
**Social Mobility:** The degree to which individuals are positive economic gains in their lives. A college degree improves the chance that individuals will have greater income earning potential and thus attain upward social mobility. CSUSM graduates have the knowledge base, skills and dispositions to launch successful careers resulting in positive social mobility for themselves, their families and society in general.

**Student Success:** CSUSM embraces an expansive and holistic definition of student success that looks beyond access, retention and graduation to focus on helping students achieve their own goals—personal, educational, and professional. Our goal is to provide seamless, equitable, and effective support for all students throughout their life cycle: from the first point of contact, in the classroom and outside it, through graduation, and beyond. Embracing a philosophy grounded in equity and social mobility, CSUSM prepares students to thrive in diverse environments as resilient and engaged global citizens.

**Stewardship of Resources:** The thoughtful and sustainable management of university resources (human, fiscal, environmental, etc.) in a manner that is consistent with our mission and values, and in a way that maximizes the value of resources to current and future university communities and stakeholders.

**Inclusive Excellence:** Inclusive excellence means that knowledge, mastery, achievement, and success are distributed equitably across the university, ensuring that diversity and inclusion are systematically leveraged to catalyze student learning, social justice, educational excellence and institutional excellence. Equity requires us to continue to work towards full access and success for all—across multiple dimensions of diversity—by identifying and eliminating barriers, preventing bias and discrimination, and providing multiple and inclusive pathways to success. In an inclusive organization, differences are valued as a source of learning and collective growth.

**Meeting Students Where They Are:** When we meet students where they are, we recognize that every student brings a different set of assets with them to college. We promote equity and student success when we recognize each student’s starting point by dismantling academic, social, or bureaucratic barriers and providing support to enable all students to thrive.