

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM  
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To California State University, San Marcos

March 16-18, 2016

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

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## **SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

### **A. The Institution and Its Accreditation History**

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM) is the twentieth campus established in the twenty-three campus California State University (CSU) system. The university began in 1979 as a satellite campus of San Diego State University. It was reconstituted as CSU, San Marcos in 1989. CSUSM's enrollment has grown fairly steadily since 1989, reaching a total enrollment of more than 13,000 students by fall 2015. CSUSM opened an offsite campus in Temecula in 2009. The university's student body displays considerable diversity, and CSUSM has been designated both an Asian American/Native American/Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

The university's mission highlights several key goals, including raising the educational attainment of its region, developing a student body that reflects the diversity of the region, and connecting with and serving the community by producing well-prepared graduates. The university is organized into four colleges: College of Business Administration (CoBA); College of Education, Health, and Human Services (CoEHHS); College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences (CHABSS); and College of Science and Mathematics (CSM). The Temecula campus offers programs in Nursing, Kinesiology, Business, and Criminology and Justice Studies, as well as a dual admission degree program in Business Administration, offered in collaboration with Mt. San Jacinto Community College. A single degree program is offered completely online. Approximately one hundred courses are delivered fully online, and another thirty-four are hybrids delivered partially online. CSUSM offers forty-four baccalaureate degrees, more than thirty minors, eight credentials programs, fourteen master's degrees, and a doctorate in educational leadership, offered jointly with the University of California, San Diego.

In 1993, the Commission approved the university's initial accreditation. That accreditation was reaffirmed in 2000 and 2009. An Interim Report Committee response in 1996 found that the institution had been responsive in key areas but registered concern about progress in general education, planning, assessment, and evaluation. Following the 2009 Educational Effectiveness Review, the Commission scheduled a 2012 interim report on assessment of learning, academic planning, and retention and graduation. The Interim Report Committee accepted the institution's interim report in November 2012.

Between 1999 and 2007, the Substantive Change Committee considered various proposals related to Education programs, in particular concerning the establishment of the Ed. D., originally in partnership with San Diego State University (SDSU) and the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and ultimately replaced an approved program offered only in collaboration with UCSD. In 2009, the Substantive Change Committee approved the Master of Education as a distance education program. In 2008, the Substantive Change Committee considered and granted final approval to accelerated Nursing programs.

In a series of 2014 actions, the Substantive Change Committee approval was granted to online BA programs in Sociology, Social Science, and Criminology and Justice Studies and a BS in Nursing.

## **B. The Accreditation Visit and Campus Participation**

The accreditation team—the chair, assistant chair, and three members—began the March 16-18, 2016 accreditation visit with a session with the institution's president followed by more than two dozen meetings with groups and individuals. Meetings with faculty, staff, administrative leaders, and students helped the team members better understand CSU, San Marcos and the institution's practice and performance, especially in areas that the team had identified as lines of inquiry during its Offsite Review, including CSUSM's approach to

strategic planning, the effectiveness of the assessment of student learning, evidence of the role of program review, and the university's approach to student success.

Prior to the visit, a team member visited the offsite campus in Temecula.

Throughout the accreditation visit, the visiting team found the campus community welcoming and eager to join the team in exploring at great depth the lines of inquiry that the team had set during its November 2015 Offsite Review (OSR). The visiting team found the campus community well-prepared for the visit and quick to respond to the team's requests for alterations in the visit schedule or the team's request for additional data.

### **C. The Institution's Reaffirmation Report**

Following the offsite review, the team commended the high quality of the Institutional Report. The Institutional Report was succinctly and clearly presented. It was effectively organized and generally supported its claims with useful data. CSUSM has clearly used the process of preparing the Institutional Report as an opportunity to gain greater understanding of its effectiveness, as shown in its reflections on high impact practices, diversity, and writing. The university has also been able to clarify ongoing challenges concerning the assessment of student learning, in particular as this relates to graduate studies. Requests from the team for additional information were timely and responsive.

CSU, San Marcos developed its Institutional Report through a process that included a broad cross-section of the campus community. The university reported comprehensively on the accreditation process at its various stages.

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS**

### Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

Following the institution’s Educational Effectiveness Review in 2009, the Commission acted to reaffirm CSUSM’s accreditation. The Commission further scheduled an Interim Report in fall 2012 on assessment of student learning, academic planning, and retention and graduation. The institution submitted its interim report on November 1, 2012. The Interim Review Committee accepted the interim report, noting that CSUSM had made key accomplishments in each of the areas covered in the report.

The Interim Review Committee concluded with two observations:

1. [W]ith such multiple and intersecting efforts, how will the institution decide which of its activities have borne the best results?” and
2. [T]he institution is encouraged to document how the exemplary evidence being collected by the various initiatives will be used to ‘close the loop’: how will feedback, in particular to faculty, be used in a continuing effort to improve their teaching and their students’ learning?”

### Component 2: Compliance with the Standards and federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

#### **A. Introduction.**

In preparation for accreditation review, CSUSM completed a comprehensive review under the WSCUC Standards for Accreditation. The Review is reflective and highlights both areas of good practice and achievement as well as areas that require attention or further development. The review does provide evidence of deep reflection and analysis on CSUSM’s part. While the institutional review did identify some areas requiring attention or

development, the team's overall finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient compliance with the Standards.

The institution also completed the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) and provided information regarding its compliance with federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints and transfer policies. The IEEI is comprehensive and in its description of academic programs assessment practices shows an institution that is taking a clear and intentional approach to educational effectiveness.

Materials provided relative to federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints, and transfer policies allow the team to conclude that CSUSM complies with these federal requirements

**B. Standard 1. Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives.**

CSU, San Marcos has a clear and appropriate sense of purpose that is broadly understood throughout the campus community. The university's mission of providing a student-focused learning experience based on students working closely with a high quality faculty, pursuing community engagement, and providing a diverse student body with access to an "excellent and affordable" education is given expression through five strategic priorities (academic excellence, student life, campus climate, community partnerships, and educational equity) and further informs what CSUSM considers to be distinctive practices, e.g., the widespread use of High Impact Practices (HIPs). Strategic priorities are further integrated into 3-year rolling plans in the Academic Affairs division. (CFR 1.1)

CSUSM adopted institution-wide Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs) in 2014 and as discussed below uses these ULOs as the core to understanding the meaning of undergraduate degrees. The University's Office of Institutional Planning & Analysis (IPA)

provides online reports of student success data. However, easily accessible evidence of student learning relative to student learning outcomes is limited. (CFR 1.2)

CSU, San Marcos abides by and supports the CSU System Academic Senate policies on academic freedom. In 2015, the CSUSM Academic Senate approved a revised Academic Freedom policy. The Academic Freedom policy appears in the University Catalog and commits CSUSM to standards of academic freedom enunciated by the American Association of University Professors. As a public institution within the CSU system, CSU, San Marcos operates autonomously with education as its primary purpose and without interference in its substantive decisions or educational functions. (CFRs 1.3, 1.5)

San Marcos has a deep-seated commitment to diversity in all its dimensions. It aims in various ways to reflect the diversity of its local community. The institution has made great strides building a broadly diverse student body and recent hires have further diversified the faculty. CSUSM has been recognized as both a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American/Native American/Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI). It is the only CSU with a California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center. A recently completed diversity-mapping project has provided a portrait of diversity at San Marcos that is rich and deep, not only in detailing the university's efforts to develop a student, faculty, and staff that reflect the diversity of the region, but also in its picture of the campus community that emerges through the interaction of people of different backgrounds and points of view, and the extent to which the campus recognizes and affirms group differences and affiliations.

In this regard, the team heard expressions of anxiety, especially among faculty members of color, about how well CSUSM is achieving its strategic objectives related to diversity. The recent, unexpected departure of the Chief Diversity Officer has brought to the surface several concerns about diversity and inclusion, including the status of a curricular

diversity requirement, bullying, the safety of faculty members of color, differential security treatment of events with a large black or Latino student presence, and other issues. While the team cannot evaluate the gravity of each of the concerns it heard expressed, they are on their face significant. In the spirit of the Commission's diversity policy, the team recommends that CSU, San Marcos take the completion of the diversity-mapping project as an opportunity to develop a richer and more nuanced conversation about diversity that will enable the institution to take action needed to continue to realize its long-standing commitment to diversity, educational equity, and inclusion. (CFR 1.4)

CSU, San Marcos provided evidence that it truthfully represents its academic goals, programs, services, and costs to students and the public generally. The institution provided evidence that it maintains fair and equitable policies and procedures dealing with a range of relevant topics. The institution exhibits transparency and integrity in its operations, as shown by its regular independent audits. San Marcos also deals with the Accrediting Commission in a serious and open manner. For example, the institution communicated proactively with WASC to ensure that the university was in compliance regarding online programs.

Based on its self-review under the standards of accreditation, the institution concluded that its performance under Standard One is generally strong, but that improvements are needed in the areas of diversity, the experience and retention of underrepresented students, and the implementation of annual assessment and regular program review for some units. It also concluded that CSUSM has additional work to do under CFR 1.2, especially integrating institutional level learning outcomes into assessment processes.

The visiting team's review generally supports the institution's conclusions. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standard.

### **C. Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

Much of the team's discussion of Standard 2 is largely embedded in the section below (Component 3: Degree Programs—Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees). Academic programs are developed within CSU system-wide standards, the requirements of specialized accreditors for many programs, and a rigorous institutional process for curricular approval.

The program review process that San Marcos has recently implemented especially impressed the visiting team. Regular program review, which focuses principally on evidence developed through annual assessment, culminates in memoranda of understanding (MOUs) that stipulate specific and measurable actions on the part of programs and administration. According to the academic deans and department chairs interviewed, MOUs are integrated into the 3-year rolling academic plans. In the words of one department chair, "This process has been really revelatory for us." While some areas (notably aspects of general education and some graduate programs) need to complete and implement their assessment programs, clear assessment programs are in place generally and effectively all undergraduate academic programs are producing annual assessment reports. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7)

The Faculty Center provides resources to guide faculty in the retention, tenure, and promotion process and presents other programming to support professional development of faculty. The associate vice president for faculty affairs maintains an accessible collection of policies related to faculty, including those related to faculty evaluation. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9)

Both materials submitted for the accreditation review and interactions with the visiting team expressed concern both about relative numbers of tenure-track faculty and

lecturers in some areas. This concern is exacerbated because even though student enrollment has increased steadily and robustly in recent years (over 4000 in the last six years) at least until recently the number of faculty has not grown as significantly. The institution also provided evidence both in materials submitted and in interactions with the visiting team that the role of lecturer faculty should be given more clarity. The visiting team encourages San Marcos to revisit its 2007 interim policy on non-tenure track faculty. (CFR 2.1)

In its own reflections on Standard Two, CSU, San Marcos identifies important challenges, including the adoption of student learning outcomes at some levels, the full articulation of the infrastructure to support assessment in all programs, including general education, and attention to whether faculty resources are sufficient for all programs. The visiting team believes that the institution is accurate in its self-assessment and concurs with these conclusions. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standard. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.6, and 2.8)

#### **D. Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability**

Much of the team's discussion of Standard 3 is largely embedded in the section below (Component 7: Sustainability).

CSUSM's program review process has provided the institution a potentially powerful tool to evaluate the adequacy of faculty resources to support San Marcos's academic programs. Each college has a hiring committee to set priorities for faculty hiring. As noted above, the Office of Faculty Affairs and the Faculty Center provide information about faculty-related policies and support for faculty development. The university's business operations are conducted with apparent integrity and audits are conducted on a regular basis.

CSUSM has operated consistently without a deficit and has been agile, especially in developing partnerships that have enabled growth even during the challenges following the Great Recession. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

While physical infrastructure seems generally adequate for the university's present purposes, the visiting team noted a number of expressions of concern about instructional space from faculty and staff. Staff responsible for scheduling classes suggested that the number of laboratory facilities and venues for large lecture classes do not match the demand for classes requiring such facilities. The team also heard concerns about the adequacy of laboratory space to support research for STEM faculty. In part, it is concerns like these that lead the visiting team to recommend that CSUSM soon embark on a comprehensive renewal of strategic planning. (CFR 3.5)

CSUSM provided evidence to show that the institution's leadership operates with integrity, a high level of performance, and accountability. The university, which operates under the general oversight of the California State University Board of Trustees, has a comprehensive administrative structure, providing clear responsibility and lines of accountability for all administrative functions. Members of the Academic Senate generally expressed confidence in the quality of shared governance at CSUSM. Members of the CFA took pains to assure the team that their participation in the strike planned for April 2016 did not reflect specific grievances with the CSUSM administration. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10)

In its synthesis and reflections on Standard 3, CSUSM identified issues of sufficient staffing levels, workload and morale of faculty and staff, and the role of lecturer faculty as areas of concern. The visiting team concurs with the institution's conclusions about these items, but would also encourage the institution to examine the long-term adequacy of its physical plant, especially its teaching and learning spaces. For that and other reasons, the

visiting team recommends a renewal of strategic planning for CSUSM. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standard. (CFRs 3.1, 3.3)

#### **E. Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement**

Much of the team's discussion of Standard 4 is embedded below in the section below (Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement).

As noted in various places in this report, CSUSM has developed and begun to implement an approach to periodic program review that is exemplary in many respects. Assessment plans are implemented in almost all undergraduate programs and many graduate programs and are in development for the general education program and the remaining graduate programs. During recent years, all but one undergraduate program that had not been conducting annual assessment have become participants in the annual assessment cycle. Faculty governance committees play a strong role in guiding the institution's approach to quality assurance. Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA) collects and disseminates data, and leaders express confidence in their access to relevant data and the usefulness of data to support decision making. Critical resource decisions, especially regarding the authorization of new faculty positions, are strongly tied to the analysis of data through program review processes. CSUSM's efforts to improve retention and graduation rates are also guided by the collection and analysis of data and appear to be bearing fruit. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

CSUSM in its synthesis and reflections on Standard 4 noted some limitations in its performance. The university sees room to improve in engaging with alumni and external constituents in San Marcos's quality assurance efforts. (Although they provide substantial evidence of engaging and collaborating with external constituents in the development of new

programs, such as the recently approved MS in Cybersecurity.) CSUSM expresses reservations about how deeply the institution has developed a “culture of assessment” and how thoroughly engaged faculty in all programs are in using the results of assessment and program review to modify programs or adapt pedagogies. San Marcos has built infrastructure for assessment, for example hiring assessment specialists at the university level and in some of its units, but wonders in its self-reflection whether institutional support for assessment is sufficiently robust. The visiting team notes these concerns and reservations. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, and 4.6)

While noting the good work done at San Marcos in carrying out ongoing planning activities related to the most important functions of the university, for example the Long-Range-Academic Master Plan (LAMP), the visiting team reiterates its recommendation that CSUSM undertake a comprehensive approach to strategic planning that would consider the institution’s opportunities and challenges in a holistic manner. (CFR 4.7)

The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

### Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees

#### **A. Degree Offerings at CSUSM**

Since President Haynes arrived in 2004, the number of undergraduate and graduate degree programs that are offered at the university has nearly doubled from 27 to 58 (currently there are 44 baccalaureate degrees and 14 graduate degrees). With the recent completion of a Long Range Academic Master planning process, additional degree program offerings are planned for the near future (in eight areas to meet emerging business/industry sector needs and four foundational undergraduate degree programs). (CFRs 2.1, 3.10, 4.6, 4.7) The Institutional

Report indicates that “CSUSM’s approach to the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees is intertwined with its mechanisms to support student success—part of a collection of holistic and complementary frameworks and practices, with a continuing emphasis on high-impact practices associated with higher-order learning and development.” In discussions with students, faculty, and administrators, the team learned that CSUSM is beginning to develop a more integrated approach to curricular decisions to ensure that existing and new academic degree programs align with institutional initiatives for student success. (CFRs 1.6, 2.1, 2.10)

### **B. Meaning of the Baccalaureate Degree at CSUSM**

The institution has defined the meaning of the baccalaureate degree in two ways—through graduation requirements and through university learning outcomes. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3) The graduation requirements for a baccalaureate degree at CSUSM include: general education (GE), academic major requirements, a competency in writing, a language other than English requirement, and competency in U.S. History, the Constitution, and American Ideals. What all students must learn as they meet these requirements has now been elegantly expressed in the four undergraduate university learning outcomes (ULOs).

Over a period of one and a half years, the campus embarked on a consultative process, with three different task forces, to formulate the university learning outcomes for graduates earning the baccalaureate degree. In December 2014, the Academic Senate approved a set of four university learning outcomes. Essay 3 in the Institutional Report, has an explicit focus on the ULOs as a statement of the meaning of the CSUSM undergraduate degree. The Institutional Report also describes examples of the opportunities undergraduate students have during their educational experience to achieve each of these learning outcomes, with a particular focus on the many opportunities to engage in high impact

practices (learning communities, service learning, undergraduate research, etc.) as well as to receive academic and social support. (CFRs 1.1, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 4.4)

The visiting team observed the institutional commitment to each of the university learning outcomes both in the essay and in several conversations with students, faculty and administrators during the accreditation visit. The campus community has clearly begun to embrace and engage with these four university level outcomes as an elaboration of what is distinctive about the baccalaureate degree at CSUSM. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 3.10 and 4.4)

### **C. Meaning of Graduate Degrees at CSUSM**

CSUSM offers 14 graduate programs (some state-supported and others self-supported, through Extended Learning) out of their four colleges. Graduate education is also supported by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research (OGSR), which convenes the Graduate Council and organizes programming in support of graduate students and their success.

The institution has defined the meaning of graduate degrees in two ways—through graduation requirements and, soon, through a set of university level learning outcomes. In addition to degree program requirements, there is a graduation writing assessment requirement (GWAR), which must be completed before a graduate student advances to candidacy. Also, “every Master’s degree program is required to include a culminating experience. The form of this experience differs according to degree programs, but all Master’s students must satisfactorily complete either a thesis, a project or a comprehensive examination.” (CFRs 1.1, 2.2, 2.3)

At the time of the submission of the Institutional Report in spring 2015, the development of university level learning outcomes for graduate student learning was underway with the goal of providing an additional elaboration to the existing definition of the graduate degree and to highlight the distinctiveness of graduate education at CSUSM. A

process was designed whereby, “These individual PSLOs (program level student learning outcomes for graduate programs) will be reviewed and used by the Graduate Studies Council as the foundation for building the overarching GLOs.” At the time of the visit, a draft of the graduate level university learning outcomes had been developed, again in a consultative process, and is currently under review by the Assessment Council. This work is novel and holds promise for bringing a key focus to the distinctiveness of graduate education at the institution. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 3.10 and 4.4)

#### **D. Ensuring the Quality and Integrity of Degree Offerings**

The institution uses many and varied processes and types of evidence to ensure the quality and integrity of its degree offerings. These processes include a recently revised, robust academic program review process (which includes a self-study, external review, development of an MOU that links resource decisions to the review and interim progress reports when warranted), processes to assess student achievement of learning specified in outcomes at the course, program, and soon the university level, an annual system of reporting program level assessment of learning (with feedback provided to programs), and planning processes with annual reports (including three-year rolling plans at the college and program levels). (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7) Types of evidence that are being used at all levels of the institution for improvement and to assure the quality and integrity of the degrees offered, include survey data (CSUSM surveys, CSU and national surveys), student performance on external examinations and capstone assignments, data and information from the assessment of student learning outcome achievement (explicitly stated in the Institutional Report, “The quality of a CSUSM degree is assessed through an analysis of these outcomes”), metrics for student success, metrics tied to planning goals and importantly, employment data on

graduates is highlighted in the Institutional Report as a key measure of the quality and integrity of the degrees offered at CSUSM. (CFRs 4.2, 4.4, 4.5)

The visiting team believes that the institution is clearly giving considerable attention to the effective use of data and evidence to define and continually improve the quality and integrity of the degrees it offers. The visiting team suggests that CSUSM give additional thought to aligning identified key indicators of the meaning, quality and integrity of degree offerings to how it describes its academic programs to differing types of “audience” and for differing purposes (e.g. prospective students and parents, multiple campus constituencies, employers, accreditation agencies and other external partners, etc.). This will enhance the utility of the effort to ensure meaning, quality and integrity of degree offerings. (CFRs 1.6, 3.7, 4.4, 4.7)

#### **E. Standards to measure meaning, quality and integrity of degrees**

Currently, the institution delineates the standards it uses to measure the meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees it offers in multiple ways with varying degrees of specificity. As described in the Institutional Report and in conversations during the visit with students, faculty, staff and administrators, standards are implied when mention is made, for example:

- 1) of how many and what type of high impact practices a student engages in and in expressions of the levels of employment of graduates;
- 2) the achievement of graduation requirements (e.g. GPA, writing requirement, etc.);
- 3) the acceptable achievement level of student learning at the course and program level;
- 4) retention and graduation metrics and
- 5) impressions and qualitative understandings of the level of student achievement of skills at the time of graduation—in their field of study, as critical thinkers, as globally and culturally intelligent as skilled communicators (note that explicit standards for achievement of

university level learning outcomes have not yet been established). (CFRs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6)

One definitive expression of standards for the meaning, quality and integrity of degrees is found as a part of the academic program review process. At the conclusion of the review, in the MOU that is developed between the program, the college and the university, a recommendation is made to continue a program: 1) as a program with a notation of exceptional quality; 2) as a program of quality and promise; or 3) as a program with conditional continuation status. However, it is unclear the degree to which this statement of standards for the quality and integrity of degrees is a part of institutional culture and aligns with the many ways described above that campus constituents think about meaning, quality and integrity of degrees. The campus is encouraged to more formally address the delineation of the standards it uses to measure meaning, quality and integrity of its degrees. (CFRs 2.1, 2.4, 4.1)

In conclusion, the visiting team encourages the campus to continue its progress in developing the culture of evidence, assessment and program improvement, aligned with student success and to infuse this work with a shared understanding and means of measuring the meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees offered at CSUSM.

#### Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation

CSUSM understands the importance of assessing student learning, development and success through its programs, services, activities, diverse learning opportunities, and courses in both Academic and Student Affairs. Assessment concepts and activities such as data collection through large-scale survey programs, including The Freshman Survey (TFS, CIRP), the College Senior Survey (CSS), and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to

capture student perceptions of learning are prominently featured in the Institutional Report and were discussed at length with various groups during the accreditation visit. CSUSM actively examines student record data from Institutional Planning and Analysis to examine retention and graduation outcomes as well. Each academic program has established program-level student learning outcomes (PSLOs) that align with newly formed Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs) consistent with the University mission. In addition, the university's assessment specialist is working with academic programs to revise PSLOs so that they are both meaningful and assessable. Moreover, the institution is currently developing graduate learning outcomes (GLOs) and completing the development of learning outcomes for general education. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.4, 2.6)

Student Affairs has done a commendable job of establishing program level outcomes that align with university level outcomes. These alignments are presented in an online matrix that indicates particular subdivision goals that connect to Student Affairs' strategies and priorities, which ultimately lead to institutional objectives. What Student Affairs has essentially done is connect its practices in an impactful way to the mission of the institution, demonstrating that CSUSM is a campus committed to organizing itself as a learning community with a holistic approach to student learning and development. Student Affairs connects its programs to the institutional goal of providing academic excellence through the ACE Scholar Services, Disabled Student Services testing accommodations, the Summer Bridge Program in the Educational Opportunity Program, and accessible student advising for undergraduates, to name a few. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.11, 4.3)

Regarding core competencies, CSUSM uses LEAP learning outcomes as a foundation for ULOs and GE outcomes, with a "Core Competency Team" (CCT) that focuses on assessment of the five competencies. CSUSM has established solid assessment

plans for written and oral communication. The development of written skills is a campus-wide responsibility, with substantial writing required in every course offered by the institution, a signal commitment to writing effectiveness. Assessment activities include an examination of direct evidence of learning from student essays and observations of oral presentations. The institution has also focused attention on assessing the remaining three core competencies of information literacy, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning, with a rubric recently developed for the assessment of quantitative reasoning. (CFR 2.2a)

CSUSM offers many diverse opportunities for students to achieve learning outcomes at multiple levels, including the core competencies. Some examples include activities deemed as “High Impact Practices” or HIPS, such as service learning, study abroad, undergraduate research opportunities with a faculty mentor, and internships. CSUSM prides itself on having mostly small class sizes, with a well-known mantra of “University First,” a devotion to student learning and community engagement at the center of all that it does. The Division of Student Affairs provides institutional-level support through its focus on campus climate, civility, and respect, which enhances the environment for all stakeholders of the institution and promotes student learning. Learning opportunities are further enhanced by active student engagement through programs offered in the University Student Union and the new co-curricular model that integrates the work of Student Affairs with Academic Affairs. Moreover, CSUSM has a large first generation college student population, with 50% of its freshmen from families where parents or guardians did not graduate from college and one-third whose parents did not attend college. What is not yet clear is the extent to which these programs are effective in helping students achieve intended learning outcomes. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.11)

CSUSM has established several committees devoted to campus-wide assessment. The University Assessment Council (UAC) includes members from both Academic and Student Affairs, and has the following charge, according to the institution's assessment website:

“The University Assessment Council was organized in 2014 and charged by the Provost to: 1) lead/coordinate assessment efforts for the campus; 2) disseminate best practices/rubrics; 3) become a "one-stop-shop" for website, resources, and an information repository; 4) review annual assessment plans and reports and report results; and 5) investigate software appropriate for campus assessment activities.”

The UAC provided important evidence to the visiting team about specific ways each college assesses its programs and makes adjustments based specifically on results. A discussion concerning this appears under component six of this report. (CFR 2.4)

However, regarding the UAC and assessment in general, the visiting team encourages the institution to examine its parameters for membership in the UAC and formalize its structure. A possible approach would be to elect council members from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs who are engaged with assessment and work directly with the Assessment Specialist for establishing multiple levels of student achievement that align with the University mission. Moreover, the visiting team believes that the role of the Assessment Specialist should be more clearly defined and formalized. As CSUSM moves to its next phase of institutionalizing best assessment practices and using evidence more strategically to improve programs and practices, clarifying the responsibilities of the Assessment Specialist in terms of providing support for college departments and working in collaboration with the Strategic Planning and Assessment leader in Student Affairs should greatly facilitate the achievement of assessment goals that still must be realized. (CFRs 2.4, 2.11)

In addition to the UAC, CSUSM has established a Program Assessment Committee (PAC) that provides oversight for academic program reviews and a General Education Committee (GEC), which includes the Assessment Specialist as a member. While these committees operate separately from the UAC, they inform UAC discussions in significant ways. Program review processes are strong at CSUSM, as described elsewhere in this report. (CFR 2.7)

CSUSM carefully monitors its retention and graduation rates. Data currently show that San Marcos is making progress, especially in first year retention rates. In the “Strategic Goals Crosswalk” provided by Institutional Planning & Analysis (IPA), first year continuation rates are currently up to 82.3% for the fall 2014 entering cohort, compared to 77.3% in 2010. The rate has improved steadily each year from 2010 to 2014. Graduation rates have also improved, though not in a linear upward fashion as seen in retention rates. The current six-year graduation rate for undergraduate students for the fall 2008 cohort is 46.8%, up from 44.6% for the fall 2007 cohort. Rates for the 2004 through 2008 fall cohorts are as follows: 43.9%, 47.9%, 42.5%, 44.6%, and finally 46.8% for the latest cohort reported by IPA. Thus, for the last three cohorts, the institution has seen some growth each year, and should continue to monitor these closely to ensure that increases continue. (CFRs 2.7, 2.10)

When asked what might be contributing to improvements in one-year retention rates, campus groups point to high-impact practices and strong program review processes that provide evidence of effectiveness. Moreover, CSUSM has established a supportive network of opportunities designed to help all students succeed. The institution is concerned with college readiness in English and math and charges its Office of First Year Programs with helping students navigate through their first college year in both academic and social arenas. It offers a first-year course to acclimate students in essential skills necessary to be

successful in their first year. CSUSM also provides a program in supplemental instruction with a STEM focus, and provides professional development opportunities for faculty to improve teaching performance for optimal student learning and success. While many of these supportive programs sound promising, their impact on closing achievement gaps has not yet been systematically evaluated. (CFR 2.7)

CSUSM cited numerous assessment goals that were to be completed in fall 2015, including assessment of all five core competencies, development of rubrics for assessing quantitative reasoning, development of graduate-level learning outcomes (GLOs), and assessment of general education outcomes using LEAP and curricular maps across general education courses. It appears that the campus now has a rubric for assessing quantitative reasoning, but the remaining goals are still in progress. It is important not only to complete these goals, but to also measure achievement of outcomes and use findings for improvement. The team believes that Appendix VI of the Institutional Report entitled “Campus Assessment Self-Study Report” from 2014 provides some excellent guidelines that could take CSUSM’s state of assessment to a much higher level. The report focuses on two key concerns, namely “data generation” and “digestion of assessment information,” as well as the critical need for communication to occur among departments and university decision makers. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.4, 2.6, 4.3)

While CSUSM clearly offers an array of learning opportunities for students to achieve important institutional outcomes in both Academic and Student Affairs, direct evidence of the effectiveness of these opportunities and specific use of findings to improve practices needs attention, which the institution readily admits. In general, the visiting team recommends that CSUSM build on its promising work of assessing student learning and enhance its use of evidence for program improvement and decision-making.

## Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

CSUSM has provided a great deal of evidence about student success. The visiting team has reviewed all descriptions, supporting resources, and met with key institutional officials to explore these student success efforts. This section outlines observations that represent strengths as well as areas for further attention regarding student learning and success. The visiting team encourages CSUSM to recognize these strengths and build upon them, while addressing areas that can be improved. An overarching aspiration of CSUSM is devising a commonly accepted and operational definition of student success. This unifying statement should help guide efforts to measure effectiveness and craft programming that is student and learning centric. The Office of Undergraduate Studies has begun to collect, organize, and consolidate data on campus leaders' perceptions about defining student success. Based on discussions with the University Assessment Council and the Academic Leadership Team, the next steps should include widening the collaboration to include all stakeholders. (CFRs 2.4, 2.10, & 2.11)

CSUSM describes itself as a learning organization and this commitment to learning and improvement is evident in much of the institution. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.6) Partly because the university is relatively young, CSUSM demonstrates an entrepreneurial spirit that is common in innovative start-ups. Examples of this commitment to improvement and growth include the Campus Connect professional development program, the student affairs emphasis on developing and promoting leaders from within, and the popularity of the programming in the Faculty Center. As the university develops and evolves, CSUSM must be forward focused about fostering this institutional spirit of innovation with ongoing and intentional professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators. The university will also want to elaborate its robust data analysis system, so that it is inclusive of all

stakeholders including faculty and students. (CFRs 2.10, 2.13, 4.1, 4.2) Use of the data extraction system Tableau shows promise for use in learning outcomes analytics. Additionally, budget decisions based on the program review process are only indirectly related to student success, although other avenues, such as the Graduation Initiative Steering Committee, can lead to budget allocations for student success. (CFR 3.5) Advanced analytics will allow for more direct connections allowing for efficient return on investment in interventions and programming. Questions that might be answered by such analyses include the following: Have increased budgets for a given intervention resulted in the expected gains in student learning and development? Has the new predictive model been accurate in identifying student needs and success factors? While the faculty center has been widely accepted as an important and well-utilized resource, it, too, can benefit from measuring and evaluating its contribution to student success. (CFRs 3.2, 3.3)

CSUSM has established a sophisticated student-centric model to educate the whole student. (CFRs 2.11, 2.13) This model relates strategic plan initiatives, learning outcomes, mission, vision, and values. A significant contributor to the success of such student-centered experiential learning is the leadership of those in the “G6”. This is a committee comprised of Student Affairs and academic affairs leaders who collaborate extensively. As a result of these efforts, the student affairs division has committed to upgrading its set of learning outcomes to make them more comprehensible to students. (CFR 2.5)

CSUSM noted significant accomplishments made in retention:

- Proactive, organized efforts to improve retention and graduate rates;
- The hiring of a Student Academic Success Coordinator;
- Making retention and graduate goals a community-wide effort; and
- Working to ensure connections between co-curricular and curricular efforts.

The visiting team believes that CSUSM would benefit a great deal by assessing the effectiveness of these programs and interventions. This will allow them to use data to identify effective practices as well as those needing improvement, adjustment, or complete cessation.

CSUSM has developed a focus on high-impact practices (HIPs) as a catalyst for students' achievement of key learning outcomes. The Office of Undergraduate Studies (OUGS) was created, in part, to provide a center of excellence in HIPs for the campus. The OUGS builds on the prior work of the Office of First Year Programs.

Research suggests that HIPs such as first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity and global learning, service learning/community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects increase student retention and engagement, and spur the development of comprehensive and critical thinking skills such as the ability to solve complex problems. Research shows that high-impact practices have numerous positive effects on students who participate in them, with increasing effects as students engage in more such practices. However, research has also shown a point of diminishing returns after a particular number of HIPs are implemented. The visiting team believes that CSUSM should engage in analysis of the effectiveness of HIPs and the value added by each additional practice. Additionally, the GE Committee indicated that there was little work being done to create common, integrated learning experiences. (CFR 2.4) The vast benefits of the liberal arts model of higher education rely on such integration, and the visiting team encourages CSUSM to examine energetically this and other opportunities to deploy the general education program to enhance student success.

Another purposeful institutional support for CSUSM students' development of comprehensive and critical thinking is the Committee on Undergraduate Research (CUGR). Faculty-mentored undergraduate research is another documented HIP. CUGR illustrates CSUSM's sustained commitment to infusing HIPs throughout the curriculum. The committee, comprised of representatives from all campus units, has set measurable, multi-year goals for developing institutional priorities for undergraduate research. These goals include:

- assessing CSUSM's undergraduate research activities;
- fostering dialogue among faculty and students, developing a system to link faculty and undergraduate research activities; and
- creating a centralized undergraduate re- search program to coordinate activities across campus.

As stated previously, direct measures of progress toward these goals would be beneficial.

The CCT secured 241 samples of in-class student presentations for the oral communication assessment in fall 2014. In spring 2015 the team chose to combine critical thinking and information literacy in the assessment. Six faculty members from six different courses scored 109 assignments (99 written, 10 oral). One course was from the general education program (n = 28). Highlights from all three completed assessments are as follows:

- Spring 2014 – Written Communication – 92.6% of students passed with a 2 on all 4 criteria
- Fall 2014 – Oral Communication – 59.4% of students scored 3 or higher on all 5 criteria  
66.4% of students scored 3 or higher on 4 criteria (presentation aids omitted)
- Spring 2015 – Information Literacy and Critical Thinking – 72.5% to 94.2% of graduates met the minimum standard (“effective”) for CT/IL on any one criterion; less than 2/3 of our graduating seniors (62.4%) meet the minimum standard on all four criteria

CSUSM should track such measures over time to determine trends of interest. As noted earlier, CSUSM administers several standardized instruments including the CERP, CSS, and NSSE. A clear description of how these are managed would be helpful. (CFR 4.1) For

example, who initiates these surveys, how and by whom are data collected, how are these results shared, and what actions are taken from these sharing exercises?

The University makes use of faculty performance evaluation review and program review in order to improve teaching and learning. Probationary tenure track faculty are required to submit an annual Working Personnel Action File (WPAF) in which they discuss and reflect upon their teaching, as well as their scholarship, creative activities, and service. The team noted the Faculty Center's contributions to programming that leads to teaching and learning improvement. The Center should develop measurements of the effectiveness of its programming to provide further evidence of the institution's effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. (CFR 3.3)

Remediation is an aspect of the student experience that influences student retention and success. CSUSM has made great strides in improving remediation rates within a student's first year of college. In 2013-14, 2127 regularly-admitted first-year students entered CSUSM. Of those students, 55% (1202) needed English and/ or math remediation broken down as follows:

- 17% (360 students) needed English remediation
- 16% (340 students) needed math remediation
- 23% (502 students) needed both English and math

Of these students, 1046 were able to clear their remediation requirement successfully with the following breakdown:

- 92% (330 students) who needed English only
- 92% (313 students) who needed Math only
- 80% (403 students) who needed both

The visiting team hopes that CSUSM will identify what has led to high percentages of passage and which of the efforts to produce these improvements were successful. (CFR 4.1)

Students of color and first-generation college students are significantly overrepresented among students needing remediation in English and math. CSUSM is proud of its success in supporting students who may otherwise be hindered by remediation requirements. Between 2006-07 and 2010-11, the remediation rates for Latino students (who made up the largest portion of CSUSM students needing remediation) increased from 68% to 88%. In addition, the remediation rates increased from 70% to 90% for African-American students, 79% to 98% for Asian and Pacific Islander students, and 67% to 94% for first-generation college students (who come into the University needed remediation at the highest rate). The remediation rates for Caucasian students also increased during this time period from 72% to 91%. Additionally, the remediation rate for women improved from 71% to 88% and rates for men improved from 74% to 90%. It should be noted that in 2011-2012, the CSU system reduced the cut-off score for English remediation, which also reduced the number of students requiring remediation. CSUSM should determine the deeper meaning of these data (CFRs 2.10, 4.1). For example, were these a result in changes in student demographics, program quality, effective delivery, or other factors?

As shown in table 5.1, since 2009, student visits to the Math Lab and Writing Center have increased 88% and 139% respectively. Similarly, academic support needs have become apparent as illustrated by the number of tutoring hours completed in the Math Lab and Writing Center (increases of 90% and 273% respectively).

**Table 5.1**

Percentage Increase/Decrease in Student Visits and Completed Tutoring Hours from 2009-10 to 2013-14

	Student Visits	Completed Hours
Math Lab	88%	90%
Writing Center	139%	273%
Language Learning Center	-1%	-22%

CSUSM should evaluate the connection between tutoring data and that of academic performance. (CFR 4.2)

Retention and graduation rates have also improved for graduate students on campus. The two-year retention rate for graduate student cohorts increased from 64.8% in 2010 to 67.7% in 2012. From fall 2010 to fall 2011, the three-year retention rate of graduate student cohorts increased from 64.1 to 67.7. In addition, in a five-year span, from fall 2006 to fall 2011, CSUSM decreased the time to degree from 3 years to 2.7 years. (See Institutional Report, Appendix 5.8). As stated previously, CSUSM should identify the treatments that were responsible for these successes. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)

Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence

CSUSM has implemented a robust program review process for academic departments. The program was revised in 2011, and includes a Program Assessment Committee (PAC) and support from the office of Institutional Planning & Analysis, which provides a “Program

Data Notebook” for departments under review. This notebook provides departments with critical data and resource material for developing the self-study in the first year of the two-year long program review process. At the culmination of a given review, a department receives a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that finalizes the agreements between the department, college and Office of the Provost that specifically lists needed improvements considered vital for strengthening the department and ultimately student learning. The MOU includes recommendations for resources such as faculty hires, facilities, student learning outcomes alignment with institutional goals, assessment support as well as program and curricular change. CSUSM has now completed reviews for “nearly half of all academic programs under the new policy,” according to the Institutional Report. By next year, CSUSM and the PAC will be able to assess achievement of recommendations in the MOU, but the process looks strong and promising at the moment. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

Another strength of CSUSM is its scaffolding of student learning outcomes from the classroom level to the program level and finally to the institutional level. It is very apparent that CSUSM recognizes best practices in assessment and is positioned to improve its efforts to consistently use data for specific program improvement. With that said, the UAC provided the visiting team with concrete examples of how CSUSM uses evidence to change programs to increase student success. Examples included examining evidence of achievement in oral communication where students were found to be deficient in producing visuals for presentations; this led directly to the establishment of a new graphics course. Graduate students in history were having trouble completing master’s theses, which led to a change in culminating experiences and a new supportive website. In the math department review, it became clear that a quite large percentage of students calculus classes received grades of “D” or “F” or withdrew. This led to an MOU recommendation to add resources

to help students pass calculus requirements, which the math department addressed through its Early Start program. Through the program review process and the MOU, CSUSM surmised that its social science program was not coherent, and thus added an introductory and capstone experience to address this challenge. The result was a rejuvenated program of 150 courses, where curricular change made a huge difference. On the basis of these key examples and other evidence, the visiting team concludes that CSUSM understands both the value of assessment and the importance of well-supported regular processes for systematically examining evidence to improve its programs and practices. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 2.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

The work of the Faculty Center, which engages faculty through learning communities, institutes, and workshops concerning effective classroom practices and students in crisis, is a noteworthy contributor to ongoing improvement. Beyond the center's focus on teaching and learning excellence, it offers faculty a supportive environment and facility where they can reflect upon and learn about opportunities for their career pathways and retirement. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4)

The Division of Student Affairs has strong assessment practices as well, particularly in the alignment of its practices with institutional goals and its apparent partnership with Academic Affairs to advance student learning and development. In previous years, Student Affairs attempted to follow a program review model using the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) framework, but found it to be cumbersome and overly complex. As useful as CAS frameworks are for providing assessment guidelines for student affairs programs, a CAS model may not be the best choice for sustaining program review and getting buy-in from departments. The visiting team suggests that CSUSM Student Affairs leadership examine best practices in student affairs program review at other institutions and

adopt a more realistic approach to examining the effectiveness of programs and activities that are vital for the mission of the institution. (CFRs 2.7, 2.11, 4.2, 4.3)

Student Affairs intentionally provides students with vital support through the Cougar Care Network, veterans' services, Title IX services, and more. The division is very data driven and intent on supporting the mission of the institution, and could soar with its assessment agenda if it employed an analyst familiar with predictive analytics. (CFR 2.10)

CSUSM has valuable resources for data collection through its Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA), mentioned above as an important support for the program review process. The role of this office is broad in scope in that it serves as a major repository for not only institutional data but also large-scale survey data that can support the institution's assessment needs, including diversity mapping. IPA uses a dashboard known as the Reporting and Data Analytics Repository (RaDAR) that provides the campus with live data that can help inform decision making. IPA makes available a wide variety of critical reports, such as student profiles, degree counts, headcounts, continuation reports, faculty workload, and more. IPA also actively contributes to strategic planning and produces a useful report called the "Strategic Goals Crosswalk." This report lists the institution's strategic priorities, goals, and measurements, and provides outcomes data such as retention, graduation, and other findings for its programs and services. IPA is also using Tableau, a data extraction and display system, to facilitate tracking milestones, declaration of major, HIPs, and career data. The degree planner is currently in its pilot phase and will be rolled out in the fall of 2016, which will help the institution make informed decisions concerning bottleneck courses and schedules. Enabled by investments in up-to-date data tools, IPA is clearly doing its part to provide essential assessment data to the campus for decision-making. (CFRs 2.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.6, 4.7)

Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

The Institutional Report indicates that CSUSM has well qualified and in many respects diverse faculty, including a majority of women and a substantial array of Latino faculty (CFR 3.1). In the past two years, nearly one-half of new faculty members came from historically under-represented minority groups. Moreover, there are clear policies and practices to assist in promoting searches for diverse faculty into the future. Both faculty and staff appear particularly committed to the institution and to student success; they also share a high measure of identification with CSUSM and its development. The visiting team discovered a wonderful battery of quite new buildings and facilities, including sufficient technology available to promote effective student learning. (CFR 3.5)

Demonstrating its commitment to the region and its significant proportion of historically underrepresented group members, the campus has established guaranteed admission agreements with ten school districts – with a cumulative enrollment of roughly 200,000 students. In addition, to serve both student employment opportunities and meet regional needs, the campus Long Range Academic Master Plan (LAMP) has identified eight areas of additional valuable programing, with the understanding that new programs would be adopted only with partnerships that covered the necessary front-loaded expenses for faculty who would draft curricula and teach the new program(s).

CSUSM enrollments have grown dramatically. As the institution's report suggests, "CSUSM has continuously exceeded enrollment targets." In fact, according to university data, in Fall 2008 there were 7,449 FTE Students (FTES) and 200.5 FTE Faculty (FTEF) who were tenured or on a tenure track. By Fall 2015, FTES burgeoned to 10,709, but the FTEF of tenured or tenure track grew only to 202.36. Therefore, in this brief seven year

period, the Student FTE surged by 44 percent, while the tenure-track FTEF increased by just one (1) percent. Moreover, CSUSM promises to grow its enrollment much larger in order to serve the region.

The J-curve growth, combined with severe budget cuts have stretched university personnel, reducing opportunities for tenure track faculty to participate in advisor roles, governance, professional development, etc., with non-tenure track faculty now teaching a majority of FTES. And there are other perceived shortfalls across the divisions, including support staff, from custodians to payroll techs, lab equipment, labs and other new facilities, to a budget reserve that is in need of restoration. The visiting team will return later in this section to this point about the strains of budget cuts, especially as coupled with enrollment growth. (Interestingly, the institution has not suffered in significant ways from deferred maintenance, as had other public institutions during the recession, principally because CSUSM's facilities are relatively new – stretching back only to the mid-1990s.)

Despite \$20 million in budget cuts over six years, with only \$14 million as yet restored, and in the face of absorbing great enrollment increases as described above, CSUSM has managed its resources in judicious ways to remain financially stable. (CFRs 3.4, 3.6) However, the university also recognizes that the enrollment growth, which came at the same time of California budget cuts, has had the quite serious consequences portrayed above. To deal with the six years of budget cuts, CSUSM has instituted a new student success fee. San Marcos has also created a variety of self-support academic programs (Extended Learning). This includes some online programs and programs at the Temecula Campus (where there has been a very intentional commitment to fostering program, college and institutional support for these programs). Importantly many of these programs return some net revenues to the campus for reinvestment in other programs and services. The university has also

realized savings from two new fuel cells, water conservation, and recycling. Moreover, to assist in the delivery of academic degree programs, the university has thoughtfully employed shared services with other entities, notably in the nursing program. During its visit, the team learned that the university is embarking on an ambitious \$50 million fundraising campaign. The team's discussions with senior administrators indicated that there is substantial external support for the initiative.

For at least the past 10 years, CSUSM has used a set of five "values" or "strategic priorities" as touchstones in ranking budget requests. The strategic priorities are:

- Academic Excellence
- Student Life and Leadership
- Diversity and Educational Equity
- Community Partnerships
- Campus Climate

As the categories suggest, there is clear attention to the needs of students, faculty, and the region. In this thoughtful and sophisticated budgeting process, new fiscal requests are formulated in units across the institution and then wend forward to their respective divisional levels. The divisions then prune and forward prioritized lists to the University Budget Committee (UBC), composed of representatives from all divisions, including faculty, staff, students, and senior administrators. The process reflects a commitment to shared governance and participant decision making. (CFR 3.10)

The budget approach has evolved into a focus on all available discretionary funds (not exclusively state funds), but does not include authority to recommend reallocations. Annually the UBC convenes to examine which requests to recommend given available

resources. A three-year approach is used to address the institution's short- and long-term goals. The UBC also reviews a host of other strategic plans, including the Long-Range Academic Master Plan, the Academic Technology Plan, the Facility Master Plan, and many others. (CFR 3.7)

Each of the multiple plans has considerable value, with regular review and updating of the myriad elements; however, in operation, each appears to be largely independent and unintegrated with the others. Moreover, while there is increasing attention to program assessment and learning outcomes (both program and university), it is too soon to gauge how instrumental, at this juncture, either program assessment or learning outcomes will become in the UBC ranking process.

CSUSM believes its budget practices are dynamic and provide not only "prudent" recommendations in accord with available resources, but with representation across the divisions, including faculty (Chair and Vice-Chair of the Faculty Senate) and student decision-making participation. The processes are transparent and engage the overall university community in communal processes, while offering a systematic methodology for evaluating and then prioritizing budget requests from across the various segments of the university.

The visiting team could discern a university-wide understanding of the institutional message that all budget requests, rankings, recommendations, and ultimate decisions are to be guided by the CSUSM list of five strategic goal areas. To help assess success in meeting the five priorities, annually, the President's Executive Council, with input from other advisory groups, reviews performance data to determine progress on meeting goals, identifying gaps, and seeking to establish next year's targets and priorities.

After reviewing the budget proposals and hearing presentations on them from division representatives, each member of the Committee casts a ranking of “high,” medium” or “low” for each request. The votes are then tallied, with a final listing of each proposal as high, medium high, etc. As part of the emphasis on shared governance, President Haynes normally has accepted the budget recommendations offered by the UBC, though, of course, there are times when the president’s understanding of needs diverges from the sum of UBC votes, and the president chooses to fund a lower ranked request. The visiting team certainly heard from various personnel that budget decisions did not fund a variety of essential academic and non-academic operations. However, during sessions with faculty senators and on other occasions, there was support that the budget process reflected solid shared governance and that faculty led in the development both of curricula and programs. (CFR 3.10)

As noted, the UBC and overall institution rely largely, perhaps exclusively, on the set of five values that were identified a decade ago and used from that time forward. To be sure, those values are meaningful and have been amplified over the period, with many offshoots. Nonetheless, since 2005, there has been no single occasion for the university community to formulate an updated and holistic set of integrated goals and strategies to treat the profound growth and budget limitations encountered, as well as the challenges and opportunities of the future.

As discussed above, CSUSM has experienced the confluence of budget cuts and enrollment increases. As the institution reviews its regional needs assessment and works closely with potential partners to generate the resources required for implementation, with the team strongly endorses the administrative objective to identify and secure sufficient partner funding prior to implementation of new programs.

As the previous discussion indicates, there is much to admire in the deft manner that CSUSM has structured budget processes and infused critical values into budget decision-making processes. Nonetheless, we offer two recommendations for the future:

First, given extensive budget cuts over the past decade, coupled with substantial enrollment growth and plans for new academic programs, that CSUSM give strong, ongoing consideration to personnel and other needs of established programs that have been affected.

Second, that CSUSM formulate a new, university-wide, integrated strategic plan that employs as much of previous planning as valuable to address future opportunities and opportunities.

#### Component 8: Reflection and plans for improvement

CSUSM used the occasion of preparing its institutional report to note areas of strength and areas of challenge. The institution also discussed how it might address areas of challenge. In its self-review under the standards, the university highlighted its efforts to develop and comprehensively deploy institutional student learning outcomes, at the graduate and undergraduate levels, its work to deepen and provide institutional support for a culture of assessment, and its attention to how to optimize the effective use of data for decision making. The visiting team's observations and analysis tend to support these conclusions.

In its overall assessment, San Marcos identified important lessons that the institution had learned by preparing for its comprehensive review and highlighted plans for areas of attention.

Key lessons learned include the following:

- The importance of high impact practices (HIPs) in providing a holistic and integrative approach to education at CSUSM.

- The necessity to take the results of the 2014-15 diversity mapping project and move forward to “even more consideration of what diversity means at CSUSM.”
- The critical role of CSUSM’s signal attention to writing across in the curriculum in defining the distinctive meaning, quality, and integrity of San Marcos work with students.

The visiting team was impressed with each of these areas and refers to some of them in its commendations and recommendations. In regard to the HIPs, the team encourages CSUSM to assess carefully the contribution of various HIPs to student learning and success.

CSUSM also discussed areas that it plans to address:

- The campus plans to continue its notable progress in the assessment of student learning by fine-tuning the work of the University Assessment Council and providing encouragement, especially in the form of augmented resources for assessment activities.
- San Marcos is also mindful of unanswered questions about graduate programs at the university. The need to complete the definition of Graduate Learning Outcomes has been noted at various points in this report. However, CSUSM also needs to make strategic decisions about the role and purpose of graduate education on the campus and the place of graduate education in the university’s overall mix of programs.

The team concurs that CSUSM should further develop its approach to and support for assessment activities. The team also agrees that San Marcos should take a comprehensive look at strategic questions like those the institution has raised about graduate education.

### **SECTION III – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW**

The visiting team was impressed with the seriousness with which CSU, San Marcos undertook the review process and the thoughtfulness with which the institution aligned its preparation for the comprehensive review with many of its most important initiatives. The team was pleased with its ability to engage CSUSM regarding its lines of inquiry. Members of the team were pleased to think along with the institution as it addresses how best to serve its mission to its students and the region. The report concludes with the team’s commendations and recommendations.

**COMMENDATIONS.** The team commends CSUSM for its accomplishments and high quality practices, in particular:

1. The development and early implementation of a robust and sophisticated program review process that integrates assessment of student learning with an effective approach to decision making at various levels.
2. The well-crafted University Learning Outcomes, which define the distinctiveness of the baccalaureate degree. The team also commends CSUSM for the initial work on University Learning Outcomes in defining the graduate degree and for the meaningful processes that are emerging for measuring the quality and integrity of the baccalaureate and graduate degrees.
3. Student affairs assessment practices of scaffolding student learning outcomes upward through university level outcomes.
4. Professional development programs that are both inclusive and intentional. Examples include the Campus Connect program, development of professional competencies in Student Affairs, and programming in the Faculty Center.

5. Successfully addressing the challenges of the last decade with a creative entrepreneurial spirit and institutional pride.

**RECOMMENDATIONS.** The team recommends to the institution that:

1. Given extensive budget cuts of the past decade, coupled with substantial enrollment growth and plans for new academic programs, CSUSM give strong consideration to personnel and other needs of established programs that have been affected by state budget constraints.
2. CSUSM build on its promising work of assessing student learning and enhance its use of evidence for program improvement and decision-making.
3. CSUSM develop a unified definition of student success and use it as the basis for analysis of program effectiveness.
4. CSUSM build on the Diversity Mapping Project to promote richer and nuanced campus wide conversations that culminate in appropriate action to realize the institution's long-standing commitment to diversity, educational equity, and inclusion.
5. CSUSM formulate a new, university-wide, integrated strategic plan that employs as much of the former planning as valuable to address future challenges and opportunities.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1—Federal Compliance

#### 1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)	
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	If so, where is the policy located? <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/Credit%20Hour.html">http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/Credit%20Hour.html</a> . Also on page 90 of current CSUSM catalog.	
	Comments: Confirmed—reflects CSU system definitions.	
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	This occurs as part of program review and schedule building processes.	
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments: Department chairs include consideration of credit hours, especially as they relate to courses, as part of the regular semester scheduling process. More formally, as part of Program Review, the self study takes into account how the program has achieved its educational outcomes. As such, the consideration of whether credit hours assignment is appropriate, especially given unit constraints (all majors, as per the Chancellor's Office, are required to be at 120 units. Given a 51 unit GE package on the campus, this means that all units in the majors are carefully counted).		
	Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
		Comments: Course schedules are available online at <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/schedule/">http://www.csusm.edu/schedule/</a> .
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 2	
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? online	
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral	
	What discipline(s)? Sociology, Education	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	Comments: Online, hybrid, and web-facilitated course policy is available at <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/online_instruction.html">http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/online_instruction.html</a> .	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated)	How many syllabi were reviewed? 2	
	What kinds of courses? Internship	
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral	
	What discipline(s)? Communication, Speech Language Pathology	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

<i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	Comments:
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? All UG are 120 units, by regulation of CSU system
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? MBA/MA Educ/MSW/ MA Sociology
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Business, Education, Nursing, Sociology
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

Review Completed By: I have reviewed the materials cited above and find them to indicate compliance with accepted credit hour and program length practice.

Brian E. Klunk, WASC Team Assistant Chair for CSU, San Marcos Reaccreditation

Date: 3.21.16

## Appendix 2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation\*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments:            Director of Admissions and Recruitment offered the NACAC "Statement of Principles of Good Practice, Mandatory Practices (see page 3) as a guideline.  <a href="http://www.nacenet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Documents/SPGP_10_3_2014.pdf">http://www.nacenet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Documents/SPGP_10_3_2014.pdf</a></p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO            Undergraduate graduation requirements as found beginning on page 105 in the current catalog.</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO            Fees and Tuition are available by semester at <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/schedule/index.html">http://www.csusm.edu/schedule/index.html</a></p> <p>Comments:            Graduate information available at <a href="http://www.asd.calstate.edu/faq/gradrate_faq.shtml#">http://www.asd.calstate.edu/faq/gradrate_faq.shtml#</a></p>
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>The Career Center provides general career information, including paid internships and campus employment: <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/careers/">http://www.csusm.edu/careers/</a></p> <p>Individual programs also provide career path information. For example, the Physics Department offers majors information on possible career paths here:  <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/physics/careers/index.html">http://www.csusm.edu/physics/careers/index.html</a></p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Enrollment Management Services surveys graduates each May and asks them to anticipate their principal activity in the coming fall. Results are found here:  <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/ipa/surveys/graduation_survey.html">http://www.csusm.edu/ipa/surveys/graduation_survey.html</a>.            CSUSM also surveys alumni to gain employment information. Those results can be found here:  <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/ipa/surveys/alum-survey.html">http://www.csusm.edu/ipa/surveys/alum-survey.html</a></p>
	Comments:

\*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

\*\*Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and

promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: I have reviewed the materials cited above and find them to indicate compliance with accepted practice.

Brian E. Klunk, WASC Team Assistant Chair for CSU, San Marcos Reaccreditation

Date: 3.21.16

### Appendix 3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation\*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where? The Dean of Students' website provides access to all student-related policies and procedures at <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/dos/index.html">http://www.csusm.edu/dos/index.html</a>
	Comments: The Office of Dean of Students provides general information concerning campus policies, procedures, and regulations. Students needing assistance with any University matter are invited to initiate resolution through that office.
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: Student grievance policy outlines policy and procedures for addressing student complaints.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? ✓YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The policy can be found at <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/student_grievance_policy.html">http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/student_grievance_policy.html</a>
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? All documents and recordings relative to an individual grievance are appropriately maintained in locked file drawers located in the Dean of Students Office for three years after the grievant separates from the university.
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? ✓YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: The grievance policy provides a procedural timeline. The Dean of Students' Office is responsible for monitoring and adhering to this schedule.
	Comments:

\*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: I have reviewed the materials cited above and find them to indicate compliance with accepted practice.

Brian E. Klunk, WASC Team Assistant Chair for CSU, San Marcos Reaccreditation

Date: 3.21.16

#### 4 – TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations\*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publically available? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? Available on the Admissions website here: <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/transfer/index.html">http://www.csusm.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/transfer/index.html</a> Also beginning on page 25 of the current catalog.
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO The Admissions website offers specific information about transfer credit from other institutions here: <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/transfer/i-want-to-apply.html">http://www.csusm.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/transfer/i-want-to-apply.html</a>
	Comments: Individual programs provide specific information regarding transfer credits, as well. For example, Psychology has information on their website: <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/psychology/transferstudents.html">http://www.csusm.edu/psychology/transferstudents.html</a>

\*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

- (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
- (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.  
Review Completed By: I have reviewed the materials cited above and find them to indicate compliance with accepted practice.  
Brian E. Klunk, WASC Team Assistant Chair for CSU, San Marcos Reaccreditation  
Date: 3.21.16

## Appendix 5 – OFF-CAMPUS LOCATION

Institution: CSU-San Marcos

Type of Visit: Reaffirmation

Name of reviewer/s: Cheryl L. Ney

Date/s of review: March 15, 2016

### 1. Site Name and Address

CSUSM at Temecula  
43890 Margarita Road  
Temecula, CA

Temecula Higher Education Center (THE Center)  
43200 Business Park Drive  
Temecula CA

### 2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a branch campus standalone location, or satellite location by WSCUC)

Serving Southwest Riverside County, both the CSUSM Temecula site (Opened in 2009) and the Temecula Higher Education site (opened in 2014, jointly with Mt. San Jacinto College) are standalone locations.

In addition to some certificate programs, the following degrees are offered:

- 1 Masters (Nursing),
- 4 Bachelor's (Nursing, Criminology and Justice Studies, Business Administration, Kinesiology)

The student profile is: 84% Female, Average age 32, Average GPA 3.6 with a 95% Graduation Rate.

- Student services offered on site: Academic Advising, Counseling Referral, Cougar Care Network, Student Programming (Coffee Chats, Dean Visits, Chamber & Economic Development Events) and Student Organizations (Business Organization for Student Success (BOSS), Kinesiology Student Organization)
- Student services from main campus: Financial Aid and Scholarships Appts. – 1 x /mo.; Career Center Appts. – 1 x /mo.; Writing Center & Math Lab – video conferencing; Associated Students Inc. sponsored events throughout the year; Library – Online services & Research class. Planned for the near future: STEM Center tutoring; ASI Representative from Temecula Campus; access to Campus Recreation; Social Justice Center activities and Alumni Association activities

Partnerships with these locations include: Mt. San Jacinto College, SW Healthcare System, Loma Linda Univ. Medical Center – Murrieta, and TV Hospital, City of Temecula, Temecula Valley Unified School District, Murrieta Valley Unified School District, Chambers – Temecula and Murrieta, Economic Dev. Corp. of SW California, Riverside County Workforce Development Centers, Small Business Development Center and Temecula Valley Entrepreneurs Exchange (TVE2)

Temecula Data

	Program Level	Number of programs	Faculty headcount	Units taught	FTEF	Student headcount	Total Units enrolled	Average Unit Load	Semester FTES	Annualized FTES
<b>Temecula Campus</b>	Master's and Bachelor's									
Summer 15		4	39	151	10.30	205	874	11.82	162	81
Fall 15		4	46	145	9.98	241	1032	12.15	195	98
Spring 16		4	43	171	11.70	300	1448	13.47	269	135
<b>TOTAL</b>										<b>314</b>
<b>THE Center</b>	BS in Business Administration									
Summer 15		1	2	8	0.67	25	44	7.04	12	6
Fall 15		1	8	30	2.37	44	171	13.30	39	20
Spring 16		1	6	25	1.87	35	113	11.2	26	13
<b>TOTAL</b>										<b>39</b>

3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

One team member participated in a half day visit to CSUSM Temecula campus and the Temecula Higher Education Center (THEC). A series of interviews were conducted with the following:

- Dr. Kristin Bates, Professor, Sociology, and Dr. Elvira Gomez, full-time Lecturer School of Nursing
- Mike Schroder, Dean Extended Learning and Suzanne Lingold, Assoc. Dean Extended Learning
- Donna San Miguel, Director of Student Services, Temecula, Extended Learning (formerly from Student Affairs on the SM campus)
- A diverse group of Nursing and Kinesiology students at Temecula campus (age, gender, ethnicity -5 total)
- Dr. Bennett Cherry, Professor College of Business Administration and group of the Sr. Experience Students (5 total, also a diverse group) at the THEC

Team Member Report

To a person, all of these individuals expressed their positive experience of these standalone locations. All were very articulate about the distinctive nature of the educational experience, which is cohort based, and is described by all as “personalized”. Students touted the value of the cohort program in proscribing their course schedule (and making available course sections) each semester so that they could complete their programs in a timely manner. They also described the importance of the peer support in encouraging them to do their best and to work together. All described the robust academic and social support at these locations (delivered at the center, virtually from the San Marcos campus or when they are on the main campus—e.g. one student travels to main campus to purchase her books from the bookstore).

The facilities in both locations clearly support learning, with robust educational technology (and a tech support person on location), movable modern furniture, etc. and includes the specialized spaces and equipment for laboratory experiences in nursing, kinesiology and science. All (faculty, students, staff and administrators) expressed a shared identity with the entire University (“We’re all Cougars”) and a special identity with these two centers.

Impressive is the intentionality in connecting the University and the home academic department to the educational experience at the centers for both students and faculty. One administrator expressed the importance of having adjuncts, who are often professionals in the community, as well as tenured or tenure track faculty who teach at the centers on a rotating basis. Rotation among tenured/tenure-track faculty is fostered so that faculty maintain the connection to their home department in terms of

relationships with faculty colleagues, the business of the department, the core mission of educating all students (no matter where their courses are being offered) and the opportunity for these faculty to continue research and scholarship with campus colleagues. Students too express an affinity for the academic major, home department and fellow students on the main campus. Temecula students attend events on the main campus. They were also conversant on how features of their educational experience were the same or different (owing to the cohort model) than on the SM campus.

It was clear from these interviews that partnerships outside the center and University are key to these students' success and their professional development in their chosen fields. Also, these partnerships are key to the success of the center. The outreach and partnership with Mt. San Jacinto Community College (MSJCC) is very effective. Students described the recruitment that led them to choose enrolling in the degree completion programs offered at these centers. In addition, students have access to clinical sites, internship sites, and area business and industry as sites, which provide work-based learning experiences and offer future employment. At the THEC, business faculty and center staff have maximized the opportunities that other tenants in the building (as an example, the Entrepreneurship Center) and nearby businesses can provide their students. Students from the centers value being from the community, learning in the community and returning to the community as professionals.

Regarding the lines of inquiry for this visit:

1. "Culture of assessment"—Nursing students were very conversant on the importance to them of stated course and program learning outcomes so that they can be "self directed learners". They also expressed the value to them of assignment rubrics so they can better understand the purpose of the assignment.
2. Meaning, quality of integrity of the degree—Students were very articulate about many of the skills reflected in the new Institutional Learning Outcomes (described in Essay three of the Institutional Report), that they were developing—communication skills, team work skills, critical thinking skills and professional skills (in nursing, kinesiology, business) and the skill of being able to apply their "deep" learning in the major to their broad learning in general education. They were also very confident in their employment opportunities because of the reputation of the institution in the community with employers.
3. Planning—faculty described some of the design features of the offerings at these centers. Administrators described the work of the Long Range Academic Master Planning Task Force in identifying future program offerings that departments are considering. The Dean and the Associate Dean described a very interesting project, led by adjunct from the College of Business, (as this team member understood it) to examine the "value chain" at the Center to improve work flow and make student services even better.
4. The experience of tenure track, tenured and adjunct faculty: as described above.

Students, faculty, staff and administrators had a lot of pride for the Center and the University. They all seem to feel very supported in their endeavors.

Lines of Inquiry	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<i>For a recently approved site.</i> Has the institution followed up on the recommendations from the substantive change committee that approved this new site?	n/a	n/a
<i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)	Very tight connection from mission, to programs to the student experience between main campus and these two centers. Academic programs connect to department on main campus. Students feel connected to main campus and its services beyond center services. Administrators and staff are well connected to campus.	none
<i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)	Connection to main campus is intentionally fostered. Enrollment services and student service units schedule regular appts at the center. Virtual appointments are used. Center students travel to main campus for events and sometimes to go to the bookstore.	none
<i>Quality of the Learning Site.</i> How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)	Very well maintained and outfitted physical spaces. Associate Dean of EL is on campus during operating hours.	none
<i>Student Support Services.</i> What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)	Some of this occurs on-site. Some services are fostered through virtual appointments—counseling and library. Students report high satisfaction with service levels.	none
<i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty is involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)	Both tenure track and adjunct faculty teach at these locations. Programs offered at these sites are monitored and supported by their home academic departments on the main campus.	none
<i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFR 2.1-2.3, 4.6)	Approval processes for courses and programs must go through campus approval processes. Tenured faculty in home department design and offer courses and programs at these centers.	none

<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)</p>	<p>Cohort model, intrusive advising yields better student success outcomes as measured by GPA, graduation rates.</p>	<p>none</p>
<p><i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results from the main campus? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)</p>	<p>Intentional connection from the faculty/program at the center to the academic department program emanates from assures integration of processes applied across locations.</p>	<p>none</p>
<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites? What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)</p>	<p>Programs at these centers undergo program review. Nursing programs are accredited. Student success metrics and student interviews reveal these programs to be educationally effective.</p>	<p>none</p>

**APPENDIX 6—Distance Education**

Institution: CSU-San Marcos  
 Type of Visit: Reaffirmation  
 Name of reviewer/s: Cheryl Ney  
 Date/s of review: March 16, 2016

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

RN to BSN (Nursing)

2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)

In Nursing, the RN-BSN program is the only fully online program. The program launched in Fall 2014. This program uses the Canvas LMS.

<b>Online Program: Student Enrollment</b>						
<b>Major</b>	<b>Year Initially Offered</b>	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
<b>RN to BSN (Nursing)</b>	<b>2014</b>	5	46	74	177	258

<b>Online Program: Growth in Student Enrollment</b>			
	Total Nursing Majors Enrollment	Total RN to BSN Major Enrollment (Only)	% RN to BSN enrollment vs. total Program enrollment
Fall 2014	1266	5	<1%
Spring 2015	1250	46	3.7%
Summer 2015	683	74	11%
Fall 2015	1659	177	11%
Spring 2016	1593	258	16%

3. Nature of the review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

The team reviewed the campus online program, including syllabi, enrollment summaries, and program review information. The team spoke with the Director of the School of Nursing and their faculty.

## Observations and Findings

Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<p><i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?</p>	<p>The Extended Learning program at California State University San Marcos provides increased access to undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education and thereby contributes to the lifelong learning opportunity of students and community members, and to the continued health and economy of the communities served by the university.</p> <p>The Academic Senate developed a policy describing the roles and responsibilities of Extended Learning with regard to for-credit and not-for-credit programs and describes the review and reporting relationship between faculty and Extended Learning in academic matters.</p> <p><b>Online Instruction Policy</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/online_instruction.html">http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/online_instruction.html</a></p> <p>Departments determine if programs will be offered online.</p>	
<p><i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?</p>	<p>Students have access to the same opportunities as other students. In the RN to BSN program, students have opportunities to serve as representatives on department Curriculum Committees and the RN to BSN Committee, attending meetings via Zoom. They are also invited to join the Student Nurses Association and apply for membership/induction into the Phi Theta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nurses. Bottom line, they have all the opportunities all other students have.</p>	
<p><i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?</p>	<p><a href="http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/designing_your_course/index.html">http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/designing_your_course/index.html</a></p> <p>The faculty teaching online have support through the instructional developers in IITS/Instructional Development Services. They can email <a href="mailto:cchelp@csusm.edu">cchelp@csusm.edu</a> for Moodle help or <a href="mailto:canvashelp@csusm.edu">canvashelp@csusm.edu</a> for Canvas help. There are student and faculty help guides on the navigation for Cougar Courses. There is a help button that takes faculty and students to resources in Canvas.</p> <p>The courses are backed up nightly by Canvas and by CSUSM for Cougar Courses. Cougar Courses</p>	

	backup copies are kept for 5 days.	
<i>Student Support Services:</i> What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?	<p><b>III. Principles for Online Instruction</b></p> <p>A. 5. Students taking online course sections have the same basic privileges as other CSUSM students. Each student enrolled in an online course section or program shall be informed of available instructional support, student services/advisers, library resources, and support services for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Students in online programs through Extended Learning have access to advisors. All students have access to the library website where students also can chat with a faculty librarian. Students in online courses using Cougar Courses have access to the Student Help information which also includes a link to the University website and tutoring sites.</p>	
<i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?	<p><b>III. Principles for Online Instruction</b></p> <p>B. Faculty Support, Rights and Responsibilities</p> <p><a href="http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/designing_your_course/index.html">http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/designing_your_course/index.html</a></p> <p>Tenured, tenure-track, and lecturers teach online. It is a department decision on who teaches online and if they offer online courses.</p> <p>There are some lecturers that teach online only.</p> <p>Faculty can take workshops through IITS/Instructional Development Services (IDS) on how to teach online. They can work one-on-one with an instructional developer throughout the design, development, implementation, and evaluation process. Training is not a requirement.</p>	
<i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)	<p><b>IV. Approval of Online Courses and Degree Programs</b></p> <p>The departments are responsible for the design of the distance education program. Faculty are responsible for the design/development of their online courses. Course and program approval processes are the same for any modality.</p>	
<i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions' online	<p>The institution collects data on retention and graduation but has not specifically targeted online courses. (Please note, the institution offers only one online program, to date.)</p> <p>Regarding online courses, in 2013-14 the institution submitted substantive change proposals</p>	

offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?	for three programs where comparisons between online and on-ground courses were specifically mentioned. Data from those comparisons are not yet available.	
<i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?	Students in online program are assessed along with on-ground students in the program. In some cases, online students meet expectations at higher rates than on-ground students. Including online courses in annual assessment is fairly recent, therefore tracking data is unavailable. However, programs are finding the information interesting and useful and looking forward to using the data to inform the program.  <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/designing_your_course/index.html">http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/designing_your_course/index.html</a>	
<i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations</i> ?	There is a contract for Canvas through Academic Partnerships. Cougar Courses is hosted on campus.	
<i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?	For 2 years, the Faculty Center has received a grant from the CSU Chancellor's Office for Quality Assurance. Faculty volunteer (and get paid a stipend) to have their courses reviewed by a team of faculty and instructional developers. 40 online courses have been reviewed since Spring 2015.	