Follow-up Report in Response

to March 2018 WSCUC Action Letter



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# Executive Summary

Sonoma State University (SSU) is pleased to present this report as a follow-up to the Western Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)’s action letter of March 9, 2018. SSU has made substantial headway on all seven recommendation areas that the WSCUC team highlighted after their October 2017 campus visit. The seven issues that SSU was asked to respond to were as follows:

Recommendation #1: Assuring every degree program has measurable learning outcomes and an assessment plan that identifies where the outcomes are being assessed in the curriculum. (CFR 2.4)

**Current Status:** Each of SSU’s degree programs now has measurable learning outcomes, and programs are working to ensure that those outcomes are posted on each program’s website and included in the university catalog. Degree programs are required to have an assessment plan as they move through the program review process and are held accountable for implementing those plans through memoranda of understanding (MOUs) developed at the end of the program review process.

Recommendation #2: Adhering to the recently approved program review policy 20061. (CFR 2.7)

**Current Status:** The revised program review policy was formally approved at the end of the spring 2017 semester. The university program review subcommittee (UPRS) has adhered to the policy for all program reviews since it was implemented.

Recommendation #3: Fully implementing a comprehensive strategic planning process that identifies measurable goals and aligns financial resources with those goals. (CFR 4.6)

**Current Status:** SSU engaged the campus community in an intensive strategic planning process during the 2017-18 academic year, and a new strategic plan was finalized in May 2018. The implementation process occurred during the 2018-19 academic year, as all campus units began aligning their strategic plans with the new SSU strategic plan and instituting tracking processes to measure progress on strategic goals. The campus also initiated a strategic budgeting process that is aligning campus financial resources with the new strategic priorities.

Recommendation #4: Effectively using newly implemented data tools (like the CSU data dashboards) to enhance student learning and success. (CFR 4.2)

**Current Status:** SSU’s use of data tools has dramatically increased since the 2017 WSCUC site visit. This expansion has enabled the campus to engage in data-driven decision making to a much greater extent than in previous years, partially as a result of having reorganized the office of reporting and analytics as the office of institutional effectiveness (OIE) headed by an associate vice president. SSU has also greatly improved the institution’s ability to support student success and retention, through implementing multiple new systems, including Tableau, the CSU’s student success dashboard, LoboConnect, and Engage@SSU.

Recommendation #5: Creating an IT strategic plan to improve the student experience and advance the mission and vision of the institution. (CFR 4.6)

**Current Status:** Since WSCUC’s 2017 visit, SSU has aligned its IT and academic technology efforts to drive the new strategic plan’s priorities, mission, and vision. SSU has created both an IT strategic plan and an academic technology strategic plan, effectively creating a two-pronged, collaborative effort within academic affairs to support SSU’s technology needs for operational effectiveness and for academic efforts in teaching, learning, and student success.

Recommendation #6: Creating and implementing a comprehensive diversity plan. (CFR 1.4)

**Current Status:** SSU has developed a proposed framework for a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative headed up by the campus’ new chief diversity officer, titled associate vice president for strategic initiatives and diversity. The proposal will be shared with the campus community for review and feedback during the spring 2021 semester, with the aim of finalizing the plan by fall 2021. SSU will continue to honor the innovative culture that has shaped the current abundance of diversity initiatives on campus.

Recommendation #7:Formally articulating what it means to be a SSU undergraduate or graduate student. (CFRs 1.2 and 2.2-2.4)

**Current Status:** Since WSCUC’s 2017 visit, SSU has gained a sharper focus on what it means to be a student at the institution. The campus has engaged in large-scale conversations and structural changes that demonstrate the convergence of thinking that has occurred around the distinguishing features of the undergraduate and graduate student experience. Within a liberal arts grounding, an SSU student is one who earns a meaningful degree reinforced by experiential learning, interdisciplinary connections, and outward engagement in a community committed to helping them succeed.

In the following pages, this report will respond to each recommendation in turn, with evidence supporting SSU’s progress as well as ongoing continuous improvement efforts.

# SSU’s Follow-up Response to Recommendation #1

[Assuring every degree program has measurable learning outcomes and an assessment plan that identifies where the outcomes are being assessed in the curriculum. (CFR 2.4)]

## Measurable Learning Outcomes for All Degree Programs

Sonoma State University’s degree programs have benefitted from the program review policy revision that was accomplished in 2016-17. The revised process includes formal training and ongoing support for departments as well as clarification of stakeholder responsibilities and feedback processes. This revision has provided more assistance and feedback for programs with scheduled reviews, and particularly offers more guidance on the development of program learning objectives (PLOs) and assessment plans (see appendix 1 for a link to training materials). In addition, in September 2017, the academic affairs division hired a full-time assessment and accreditation coordinator to assist department faculty with the many facets of program review and evaluation. In spring 2019, the self-study guide was revised to provide clearer guidance to programs about the central points of inquiry and evidence needed for effective program review (see appendix 1 for a link to the current guide). The guide was designed to provide structure and to give faculty a framework for inquiry, while also affording some flexibility for the unique aspects of particular programs. The guide addresses six significant areas of inquiry: program context and curriculum, assessment, faculty, program resources, student population, and a proposed plan of action, and it offers prompts and questions intended to assist faculty in their assessment of their program. The assessment of students’ demonstration of learning on the PLOs and the subsequent program revisions made as a result of the assessment are fundamental to the self-study process. Finally, shared governance has reinforced the importance of assessment of student learning through the curriculum revision process. Documentation for curriculum revision requires programs to clearly state their PLOs and assessment approaches as part of the approval process.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Degree Programs By School** | **PLOs** |
| **School of Arts & Humanities** |
| American Multicultural Studies, BA | 13 |
| Art History, BA | 8 |
| Art, Studio Concentration, BA  | 9 |
| Studio Concentration, BFA | 12 |
| Chicano & Latino Studies, BA | 10 |
| Communication Studies, BA | 5 |
| English, BA | 21 |
| English, MA | 21 |
| Film Studies, MA | 6 |
| French, BA | 7 |
| German Cultural Studies, BA | 14 |
| Hutchins Liberal Studies, BA | 6 |
| Liberal Studies, BA degree completion | 12 |
| Music, BM | 5 |
| Music, BA | 3 |
| Philosophy, BA | 4 |
| Spanish, BA | 11 |
| Spanish, MA | 5 |
| Theatre Arts, BA | 10 |
| **School of Business and Economics** |
| Business Admin, BS | 6 |
| Business Admin, MBA | 5 |
| Business Admin, EMBA | 4 |
| Economics, BA | 4 |
| **School of Education** |
| Early Childhood Studies, BA | 7/concentration |
| Education, MA | 7 |
| **School of Science and Technology** |
| Biology, BA/BS | 4/4 |
| Biology, MS | 4 |
| Chemistry, BA/BS | 11/14 |
| Biochemistry, BS | 14 |
| Computer Science, BS | 5 |
| Electrical Engineering, BS | 7 |
| Computer & Engineering Science, MS | 7 |
| Geology, BS | 9 |
| Earth Science, BA | 9 |
| Kinesiology, BS | 5 |
| Mathematics, BA/BS | 4/4 |
| Statistics, BS | 12 |
| Applied Statistics, BA | 9 |
| Nursing, BSN | 8 |
| Nursing, MSN | 8 |
| Physics, BA/BS | 6/6 |
| **School of Social Sciences** |
| Anthropology, BA | 6 |
| Counseling, MA | 13 CMHC and 15 for SC |
| CCJS, BA | 5 |
| Cultural Resource Management, MA | 11 |
| Geography & Environment, BA | 4 |
| Environmental Studies, BS | 4 |
| Global Studies, BA | 4 |
| History, BA | 5 |
| History, MA | 5 |
| Human Development, BA | 5 |
| Master’s in Public Administration | 5 |
| Political Science, BA | 11 |
| Psychology, BA | 6 |
| Psychology, MA (Depth) | 22 |
| Sociology, BA | 6 |
| Women’s and Gender Studies, BA | 13 |
| **Other Degrees** |
| Liberal Studies, BA (Ukiah-Napa-Solano) | 4 |
| Organization Development, MA | 10 |

Curricular revision proposals now need to include the most recent program review self-study as an attachment, with reasoning for the curriculum change linking back to the program review documentation. Also, the educational policies committee (EPC) is returning assessment plans to the departments for further clarification when necessary. These processes provide another mechanism for ensuring regular departmental review and consideration of their overarching goals for student learning.

All of SSU’s degree programs have developed PLOs, with some being more finely crafted than others (see appendix 1 for links to examples of recent program reviews). A large majority of the 48 baccalaureate degrees and 15 master’s degrees have *measurable* PLOs. A few programs have broad objectives, which still need to be honed in order to attain measurability, and these refinements will naturally occur as those programs move through the program review process in the next three years.

 The table (right) shows the current status of PLOs across SSU’s degree programs. About 75% of the degree programs have ten or fewer PLOs, typically regarded as a manageable number to track and assess. Twenty-one percent of the programs have 11-20 PLOs, and less than 5% have more than 20 PLOs. While some programs can have more than 10 PLOs when they are broad degrees that draw on multiple disciplines or when they have disciplinary accreditation that requires certain outcomes, having a very large number of PLOs can also be indicative of a common ‘*early stage of development*’ in assessment practice. Over time, programs gradually distill and refine their PLOs to the essential educational outcomes that the program will focus on for that degree. One of SSU’s goals for the next 5 years is to assist departments with the refinement of their current PLOs into a smaller set of overarching outcomes for student learning, so that the assessment process is more delineated and manageable for their programs. As indicated above, all curriculum revisions are now tied to program review and assessment.

 As more programs move through the new program review process, they will benefit from the expanded support that now accompanies the process. Additionally, the campus is focused on disseminating PLOs much more widely in the next two years to provide enhanced clarity for students as they choose among degree programs and pursue their degrees. PLOs are progressively being added to each program’s website, with a goal for all PLOs to be posted online by the end of the 2020-21 academic year. The PLOs for every degree program are also scheduled to be incorporated into the 2021-22 university catalog during the catalog revision process that launched in fall 2020.

## Assessment Plans for all Degree Programs

The large majority of SSU’s degree programs have some form of an assessment plan, which is monitored (to track implementation) and fine-tuned (in the spirit of continuous improvement) as programs move through the review process. An examination of recent program review documents indicates that programs exhibit a range of maturity levels with their assessment plans. They vary in many ways, including whether indirect or direct measures are used (or both), what process is used by department faculty to assess PLOs, how programs “close the loop” after an assessment cycle, the level of refinement of their course maps, and the extent to which there is a defined schedule/timeline for the assessment process.

It is interesting to note, and perhaps not unexpected, that the more mature assessment plans are most commonly (though not exclusively) seen in the degree programs that maintain separate, specialized accreditations (such as Nursing, Business, and Education). Most of SSU’s programs have assessment plans that are best described as evolving; they are on the upward trajectory in terms of their overall organization but are either more newly developed or still require some extra work to deepen their degree of embeddedness, focus, and/or consistency (see appendix 1 for an example of an assessment plan).

The goal for SSU in the next three years is to continue offering training, support, and mentorship to programs with evolving assessment plans, to enable them to hone those plans in ways that deliver the most useful information for program improvement and student learning. In developing the response to this recommendation, it became clear that SSU could benefit from a fine-grained way of determining the developmental level of different programs’ assessment plans. To that end, a meta-assessment tool will be developed and implemented in 2020-21 by the office of academic programs, in consultation with the university program review subcommittee (UPRS), to enable all programs’ progress (related to program review components) to be analyzed across a standard set of criteria. The aggregated data will provide a baseline measurement of where SSU stands, as a campus, on its overall development in the assessment area. In subsequent years, goals can be set to achieve some percentage of improvement (e.g., “10% increase in the number of programs scoring in the ‘*developed*’ or ‘*highly developed*’categories”), and the meta-assessment tool can thereby be used to track campus progress over time.

## PLOs and Assessment for the General Education Program

 SSU has also addressed PLOs and assessments in its General Education (GE) curriculum, as a part of the comprehensive GE revision that was initiated by the academic senate in the 2017-18 academic year. The proposed revision was informed by feedback provided from students and faculty, GE program review, campus listening tours, and best practices from across the nation. The new GE program was approved by the academic senate in spring 2019, and it includes measurable PLOs encompassing 13 learning outcomes (see appendix 1 for the GE learning outcomes). An assessment plan was developed, which focuses on faculty creating and submitting “signature assignments” for subsequent review. Three rubrics were developed for a summer 2020 pilot test of the assessment process. Rubrics for the remaining 10 PLOs will be developed through fall 2021. See the response to recommendation #7 for more information about the GE assessment process.

# SSU’s Follow-up Response to Recommendation #2

[Adhering to the recently approved Program Review Policy 20061. (CFR 2.7)]

## Program Review Policy Revision and Process Improvements

The UPRS, a subcommittee of the academic senate’s academic planning, assessment, and resources committee (APARC) took on the task of revising SSU’s program review policy in fall 2016, with a special focus on separating the policy and principles of program review from the procedural guidelines (see appendix 2 for the link to the revised program review policy). The policy and guidelines were discussed in multiple Senate committees as well as during a faculty retreat, and the suggested changes included the following:

* More formal training for the departments beginning the program review process
* Ongoing support from the office of academic programs for the departments and the program review coordinators as they prepare the self-study with the goal of ensuring timely completion of the self-study and engaging faculty in discussions about assessment and curriculum revision, as well as other aspects of the program review template
* Clarification of the external review process that creates opportunities for the provost and the AVP for academic programs to discuss the external reviewer’s findings with the department chair and dean, thus ensuring that administrators are invested in the process and working with the department on how to use the external review findings
* Clarification of the role of school curriculum committees and the deans in the program review process with clear guidelines for the feedback needed at those levels
* Development of a set of guidelines for UPRS to use when providing feedback to departments, which also enables UPRS to assess the quality and integrity of the program review process
* Clarification of the MOU template and the contents of the MOU, which should spell out departmental responsibilities and timelines for action items as well as the support and resources needed from the institution for the department to make progress

The revised program review policy was formally approved at the end of the spring 2017 semester. The revised policy was put into practice in the fall 2017 semester. In the years following the revision to the program review policy, UPRS has focused on refining workflows and processes to support continuous improvement and assessment capacity in degree programs. In 2018-19, UPRS created a template for a new findings and recommendations report (FAR) that guides their conversations with program representatives, by focusing attention on curriculum, assessment, staffing and resources, students, and the program review process. Through the FAR, the goal for UPRS is to identify program strengths and areas for growth, to help refine assessment practices when needed, and to synthesize findings across all program reviews to identify common concerns and/or challenges that might be addressed in a more holistic way across the university.

UPRS also made significant changes to the program review self-study template in the 2018-19 academic year. The committee heard from faculty that the template was redundant and overly complex. In response to faculty feedback, UPRS revised the template, reimagining it instead as a self-study guide for program faculty to use to focus the discussions and data-gathering they would need to do during the self-study process (see appendix 2 for the link to the Self-Study Guide and process guidelines).

In the 2019-20 academic year, UPRS focused attention on crafting guidelines for curriculum committees, deans, and external reviewers. The committee had found that feedback from these stakeholders was inconsistent and did not always add appreciably to the review process. UPRS carefully reflected on what each stakeholder’s role in the process should ideally be and what insights or information those stakeholders could provide that would be beneficial to program faculty and to UPRS. This deliberation resulted in a set of brief guidelines for each of the three stakeholder groups (curriculum committees, deans, and external reviewers) that align with the framework set forth in the self-study guide and that highlight questions each stakeholder is especially well-positioned to address (see appendix 2 for the links to information on the external review process).

Discussions in UPRS during the 2020-21 academic year have focused on aligning the program review guidelines with the Sonoma State strategic plan, and changes to the self-study guide may be proposed through governance to highlight that alignment.

## Adherence to the Revised Program Review Policy

UPRS has adhered to the revised program review policy for all program reviews since it was formally implemented. The program review process typically takes two years. In year one, the degree program completes its internal program review, writes a self-study document, and brings in an external reviewer. In year two, the self-study document and the external reviewer’s report are sent to the school’s curriculum committee and to the school’s dean. Feedback from both sources is incorporated into the self-study document and then the program has its formal review with UPRS (and graduate degree programs have their documentation reviewed by the graduate studies subcommittee prior to visiting UPRS). UPRS writes its Findings and Recommendations Report (FAR), and all documentation is forwarded to the provost. Key documents from the program review process are posted on the program review website (see appendix 2 for the FAR template).

Following completion of each program review and FAR, the provost (or designee), dean, and department chair meet to discuss the outcomes and the steps to be taken as a result of the review. From the discussion, an MOU is prepared with the help of academic programs staff by the department chair, dean, and provost to establish common expectations in order to support the program’s continued progress over the subsequent program review cycle (see appendix 2 for the MOU template). The MOU may also contain commitments for resource allocation. This is the stage of the program review process where the campus needs to improve its processes. In recent years, the requisite MOUs have been drafted, but the final approval by the signatories to the MOU has sometimes not been accomplished. There appear to be two main reasons for not being able to get these MOUs finalized. In some cases, the signature step simply slipped away due to busy schedules and other priorities. In other cases, the parties were not able to agree on the terms of the MOU. The office academic programs recognizes that it now needs to enhance its involvement in this last step in order to support all parties in getting the MOUs successfully across the finish line.

# SSU’s Follow-up Response to Recommendation #3

[Fully implementing a comprehensive strategic planning process that identifies measurable goals and aligns financial resources with those goals. (CFR 4.6)]

## SSU’s Strategic Planning Process

 In fall 2017, Sonoma State launched an intensive strategic planning process that engaged the campus community in many conversations about the mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities that would define and guide SSU through 2025. At the president’s request and in response to the WSCUC site team’s recommendation, the Provost launched the process after discussions with the academic senate executive committee and senators from associated students. A task force was created that was co-chaired by the provost and the academic senate chair. From the beginning, the task force dedicated itself to a collaborative approach that was designed to ensure broad and diverse representation across all stakeholder groups. Task force membership was built through a nomination process and resulted in the following representatives: 3 faculty, 3 students, 3 staff, and 1 alum/community member (see appendix 3 for links to the SSU strategic plan, to strategic planning process information, the strategic planning timeline, and to the strategic planning task force [SPTF] membership list).

 The task force was committed to providing numerous input opportunities (both in-person and online) and to using an appreciative inquiry process (i.e., building on the strengths of SSU). The task force was also supported by a consulting firm, Leap Solutions. The strategic planning process was divided in three phases: Share, Shape and Unite (see appendix 3 for link to information on these phases).

* **Share phase:** The task force began this phase with a launch event and an online survey to get input from faculty, staff, students, and community members. Input was also sought from members of five advisory boards and other community members. (December 2017 – February 2018)
* **Shape phase:** During this phase, strategic planning exercises were done in departments, units, schools, and divisions. Everyone was welcomed to participate in this phase, and training was provided. World cafés were also held throughout the month of February, generating strong participation from all stakeholder groups. (February – March 2018)
* **Unite phase:** During this phase, the task force drafted a plan, shared the data, shared updates about the plan, and responded to requests for more opportunities for feedback. After processing all input, the task force finalized the plan and shared it with the campus. (April – May 2018)

 The task force emphasized inclusivity in the strategic planning process. Approximately 30,000 people were invited to participate in the SSU strategic planning process. Nearly 4,000 students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members participated in the strategic planning process. The entire community was invited to provide feedback on the strategic planning draft before it was finalized. All input was discussed, considered, and analyzed throughout the process. Participation by constituent group was as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Participant Group** | **Number of Participants** | **Percentage of Total Participants** |
| Faculty and Staff | 1680 | 44% |
| Students | 1143 | 30% |
| Alumni | 538 | 14% |
| Multiple Affiliations | 336 | 9% |
| Community Members | 124 | 3% |
| SSU Board Members | 30 | 1% |

 The task force had a strong commitment to inclusive excellence, information sharing, and using an evidence-based approach, as can be seen in the following process features:

* The strategic plan was publicly launched at an event on May 9, 2018. Specially designed, Lego-type blocks were given out widely, with the new strategic priorities and values inscribed on them (see appendix 3 for launch questions and an image of the Lego-type blocks).
* The senate chair and provost regularly updated the academic senate executive committee and the academic senate about the progress regarding strategic planning throughout the year.
* Regular communication with constituent groups and the entire community helped the task force shape a highly inclusive process.
* To ensure inclusion and to deliver on the idea of a “data democracy,” the data that was gathered was posted to SSU’s website to make it available to all.
* The task force performed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis and used the analysis to drive the plan.
* Leap Solutions (consultants) supported the data analysis independently and then compared it to the internal SSU data analysis to ensure consistency, in addition to cross-referencing the findings to ensure nothing got missed in the data as the task force started to draft the plan.
* The task force also listened to feedback and adapted its process along the way. For example, an extra world café was added in response to students’ requests to have an event that would work with their schedules. Also, the draft of the strategic plan was opened up to the entire community for feedback in April 2018, based on a request for more opportunities for input (see appendix 3 for the list of questions from the world cafés and an example of data collected at one of the world cafés).

## SSU’s Strategic Plan 2025

 Sonoma State’s strategic plan 2025 is a roadmapthat the campus actively uses to guide budgeting, planning, and continuous improvement efforts. The mission statement for the new strategic plan is as follows:

Sonoma State is a regionally serving public university committed to educational access and excellence. Guided by our core values and driven by a commitment to the liberal arts and sciences, Sonoma State delivers high-quality education through innovative programs that leverage the economic, cultural, and natural resources of the North Bay.

And this is SSU’s new vision statement:

Sonoma State University embraces innovation in our quest to be a national model for public higher education by 2025. Our students graduate prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to make an impact in the community and the world.

The new strategic plan affirms the seawolf commitment (SC) as an important driver of campus core values (see appendix 3 for a link to the SC). It emphasizes that SSU’s values should be expressed through the institution’s work and in support of all strategic priorities, and it also reaffirms the campus’s already strong commitment to the following core values (see appendix 3 for a table demonstrating how the SSU community ranked these core values in terms of importance):

* Diversity and social justice
* Sustainability and environmental inquiry
* Connectivity and community engagement
* Adaptability and responsiveness

 SSU’s strategic plan has four priorities, which provide a road map for the plan’s implementation in 2018-2025. Each priority also has supporting themes which elaborate on the priorities and are a reminder of what the data revealed regarding each priority, providing a way to ensure that the details/nuances are carried forward as the plan is implemented (see appendix 3 for a link to the strategic priorities and measurable division goals).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strategic Priority** | **Description** |
| Student Success | Sonoma State aspires to be a national model for student success, which includes all aspects of the student experience, from academics to campus life to graduation. All members of our campus community have the responsibility to serve students with integrity and to provide the support services students need to succeed.  |
| Academic Excellence and Innovation | Sonoma State has high-quality, innovative academic programs that prepare students to flourish in a changing workforce and world. By educating beyond classroom walls and across disciplines, Sonoma State promotes synergy and creativity in a dynamic educational environment that responds to regional workforce and community needs. |
| Leadership Cultivation | As the region’s only public four-year university, Sonoma State embraces its leadership role in the North Bay and beyond. We prepare the next generation of leaders by providing students with opportunities to learn the knowledge and skills needed to build a better society both locally and globally. |
| Transformative Impact | Sonoma State transforms the lives of students, families, and communities by providing educational access and opportunity to help all students succeed. Our faculty and staff work to transform our region, our communities, and our academic disciplines through service, research, programming, and outreach.  |

## Strategic Plan Implementation and Goal Measurement

 The implementation of the strategic plan began during the 2018-19 academic year, as campus divisions worked to align their current strategic plans with the new SSU strategic plan (or created new strategic plans) and instituted tracking processes to measure progress toward strategic goals. Each division developed measurable goals and tactics that have been captured on the website, as a public commitment to the plan’s priorities. For example, academic affairs developed these goals and tactics related to thestudent success strategic priority:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Goal** | **Tactics** |
| Meet SSU's GI2025 graduation and retention goals, including elimination of all equity gaps | Systematize identification, communication, and training relevant to student success best practices (including advising, scheduling, at-risk student support, etc.) |
| Implement and support effective student success technology support for improved advising, early warning, and overall student academic support |
| Create and sustain robust tracking systems to enable schools, departments, and programs to interact with correct data sets related to student success |
| Identify and remove barriers to graduation and timely progress to degree |
| Create pathways to graduation that allow students to take all necessary classes in four years (or two for transfers)  |
| Promote service opportunities that include impacts on our own diverse student populations |
| Increase use of affordable textbook solutions and improve timeliness of textbook orders to ensure students know the full cost of a given class with advance notice |
| Create and implement a sustainable A-G (admissions to graduation) student recruitment and support services plan that aligns with SSU's identity as a regionally-serving and Hispanic Serving Institution | Create and implement robust, intentional student recruitment plan consistent with SSU's HSI status (including targeted recruitment of Pell eligible, first generation, under-represented minority students) and consonant with our commitment to diversity (including to international student recruitment) |
| Create and implement an academic student support services plan that includes tutoring (Learning and Academic Resource Center [LARC]), supplemental instruction, and advising support |
| Expand and create programs that build stronger links with P-12 students to improve college preparedness and college attendance |
| Modernize SSU's teaching and learning spaces and business processes in support of student success | Create and maintain 21st century teaching and learning classroom standards to ensure learning spaces aligned with student and curricular needs |
| Streamline relevant business processes to enable more effective navigation of everything from admissions to registration to applications for graduation |
| Modernize and automate intake of transfer records |
| Modernize and automate course substitution and course petition forms |
| Create and implement electronic transfer request system |

The measurable goals and tactics for each division are posted on SSU’s strategic plan website, as well as the strategic plans for each division (see appendix 3 for links to these divisional strategic plans). Each division is tracking progress on its goals, and many are employing the Smartsheet tool to aid with tracking and the annual reporting of results (see appendix 3 for an example of Smartsheet progress tracking).

The implementation process continued into the 2019-20 academic year. To support the implementation process, training was offered to leadership, boards, chairs, and others on how to implement the strategic plan. Once the divisions had developed their implementation plans, the units within those divisions began creating their own implementation plans in alignment with their respective division’s plan. All plans are expected to have goals, strategies, and metrics, so progress can be measured and tracked. Between 2019 and 2025, the emphasis will be on assessing and measuring progress annually in the various divisions and units and adapting goals when necessary to adjust for changing circumstances.

## Alignment of Financial Resources with SSU’s Strategic Plan 2025

 Sonoma State’s communication, transparency, and strategic alignment of the campus budgeting process have undergone a major transformation since the WSCUC team visited in fall 2017 (see appendix 3 for the link to SSU’s budget and planning homepage). SSU began aligning its budget to the campus’ new strategic priorities during the first implementation year by building the campus strategic budgeting framework composed of the annual budget call, the implementation of the Questica budgeting software, the university operating fund reserve policy, and a commitment to budget transparency and communication (see appendix 3 for a more detailed description of strategic budgeting in the document sent to all divisions at the end of the appendix). The first annual budget call was implemented in the 2018-19 academic year. The process transitioned the previous top-down-only budgeting approach to one that incorporates individual campus unit planning. A new budget planning template gave campus units the opportunity to examine their budgets on an annual basis and make any adjustments needed to support the strategic plan. In 2019-20, the annual budget call was integrated into the Questica budgeting software to enable greater transparency of the budget as well as unit-based assessment and measurement of annual goals. The president’s budget advisory committee (PBAC) and the division-based budget resource groups worked to help units report on their resource alignment with campus priorities. The integration into Questica also expanded reporting beyond just stateside funds towards a campus-wide all-funds budgeting approach. While this expansion is still in progress, the goal is to help in eventually incorporating a process to tie auxiliary and self-support budget planning into the strategic planning process. The expansion also aims to delineate “base” budget allocations from “one-time” allocations to ensure funds are reallocated each year in ways that closely support strategic priorities.

 Campus involvement and conversation about SSU’s budget have grown significantly since 2017. Two campus budget forums were held in 2018-19, building on the practice that was initiated in 2017-18. The forums are open to the entire campus community and included presentations as well as roundtable discussions hosted by members of PBAC to gather feedback and encourage dialogue around the topic of strategic budgeting. The fall 2018 forum focused on the topics of university year-end balances, provided updates on the current year budget and the importance of strategic budgeting, and introduced the concept of the annual budget call. Academic affairs also highlighted how that division has utilized resources to support strategic initiatives such as business process improvements, classroom standards, and academic salaries (see appendix 3 for the list of 2018-19 accomplishments by academic affairs units).

 The spring 2019 forum reviewed the California governor’s 2019-2020 budget proposal and the potential impacts on SSU, and it included a presentation of how multiple divisions had realigned resources to achieve their strategic initiatives. The fall 2019 forum focused on the current budget picture, the challenges created by a multi-year enrollment reduction, and the launch of a strategic enrollment management planning process.

 The spring 2020 virtual forum delved into the budgetary impact of both enrollment declines and COVID-19, and it emphasized how decisions made to address the anticipated deficit would be aligned with SSU’s core values and strategic priorities. For the annual budget call process for 2020-21, which was launched during spring 2020, campus units were required to describe how their budget plans would support the strategic priorities. The weblink to the campus budget plan as well as the spring 2020 budget forum is available in appendix 3.

 Spring 2020 also brought COVID-19 and the pivot to remote instruction, which had a considerable impact on the budget for academic year 2020-21 and on enrollment, particularly for first-time, first-year students. Sonoma State responded with a plan to address a $20 million budget deficit related to enrollment declines, state budget declines, and revenue shortfalls related to the pandemic. That plan included utilizing $1 million in reserves, division reductions of 12%, and a hiring slowdown, along with other measures. The fall 2020 virtual forum detailed those budget reductions (see appendix 3for a link to the SSU office of budget and planning, where recent budget forums are documented). The extensive work the campus has done over the past three years to build budget competency and ensure alignment of budget allocation with campus strategic priorities served SSU well during the economic downturn of 2020. Campus leaders are proud of the work departments have done to ensure alignment with our values and goals while responding to the state and federal cuts. The campus is likely to face additional cuts in state resources in future years, so SSU is focused on maximizing enrollment and is prepared to address future deficits with the same strategic budgeting principles developed over the past few years.

# SSU’s Follow-up Response to Recommendation #4

[Effectively using newly implemented data tools (like the CSU data dashboards) to enhance student learning and success. (CFR 4.2)]

## New Data Tools Support SSU’s Planning and Decision-Making

SSU’s use of data tools has dramatically increased since WSCUC’s 2017 visit. This expansion has enabled the campus to engage in data-driven decision-making to a much greater extent than in previous years, and it has also greatly improved the institution’s ability to support student success and retention. At the time of the last visit, SSU was using Blackboard Analytics to manage data for student-success-related decision-making and reporting. The system was an improvement over SSU’s previous approaches to data management, and it enabled the campus to begin identifying the barriers to student success and more closely track progress to graduation for the CSU’s GI2025. As SSU’s capabilities and experience with data tools has grown, the campus has implemented multiple new systems to support student learning and success, including Tableau, the CSU’s student success dashboard, LoboConnect, and Engage@SSU.

## Tableau

 In spring 2019, SSU implemented Tableau, a data visualization and analytic software system. Using Tableau, analysts have developed an expanding library of interactive dashboards and data visualizations that are designed to provide insight into patterns in admissions, enrollment, academic resources, and student achievement. Through the dashboards, users can review and compare a variety of data simultaneously. The dashboards are updated regularly from PeopleSoft/MySSU and official reporting files, allowing data to be available 24/7. As it became clear that Tableau was a more powerful resource for the campus, Blackboard Analytics was discontinued in June 2020.

In 2019, SSU replaced its former office of reporting and analytics with an expanded OIE led by a new associate vice president (AVP) (see appendix 4 for a link to the OIE website). Under the AVP’s direction, OIE has created a wide variety of Tableau dashboards that are available online to SSU faculty and staff and that provide up-to-date information and clear statistical analysis (see appendix 4 for the link to Tableau dashboards). The academic resource dashboard (ARD), developed and published in spring 2020, provides a detailed look at important metrics related to the overall function of academic departments. In addition to the metrics that are frequently referenced when assessing department function (majors, FTES, SFR, etc.), the various dashboards go into greater detail, providing ratios of items such as majors to tenure track FTE, or FTES to total department full-time employees. Familiarity with the metrics included in the ARD will help schools and academic departments determine when it is time to advocate for additional resources to support student progress to degree (see appendix 4 for the link to the ARD). Examples of the dashboards that are currently available for School and department reference are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Full time equivalent (FTE) employee
 | * Student faculty ratio
 |
| * Full time equivalent faculty (FTEF)
 | * Tenure track density
 |
| * FTE student
 | * Tenure track FTE
 |
| * FTE student for FTE employee ratio
 | * FTFY four year grad rates
 |
| * Major enrollment
 | * FTFY retention rate
 |
| * Majors to FTE employee ratio
 | * Junior standing two year grad rate
 |
| * Majors to tenure track FTE ratio
 | * Transfer two year grad rate
 |

To support campus efforts to rebuild enrollment, many of SSU’s newer Tableau dashboards are designed to inform strategic enrollment management efforts (see appendix 4 for the link to the enrollment reports available through Tableau). One provides a full look at applicants to enrollments, providing count and yield trends at the university, school, and department levels for various student populations (e.g., first time first year, transfers, and postbaccalaureate/graduates). Another dashboard uses data from the National Student Clearinghouse to provide insight into where admits go when they decide not to accept an offer of admission from SSU allowing the office of strategic enrollment (OSE) to refine its marketing and recruitment messages. A third provides daily FTES updates at the course, department, school, and university levels.

To encourage widespread usage of Tableau, the main landing page provides support and navigation tips, and training sessions have been provided to faculty (see appendix 4 for a link to the main landing page for Tableau). Tableau data is critical to SSU’s tracking and reporting processes, both internally and externally. The dashboards provide readily available information for aggregated, institutional-level reports (such as overall graduation and retention rates) as well as department-specific, fine-grained analyses (such as investigating specific courses in which achievement gaps are occurring).

## CSU Student Success Dashboard

 A second data tool that is widely used by SSU faculty, staff, and administrators is the CSU’s student success dashboard (SSD; see appendix 4 for a link to the SSD). Developed by the CSU’s chancellor’s office and promoted to campus by OIE, this resource provides a comprehensive set of dashboards related to four key areas. First, there are dashboards to track SSU’s progress on achieving its GI2025 goals. Second, the faculty dashboard compiles a variety of data to help faculty gain a better understanding of the demographics and enrollment patterns of their students. It also identifies bottleneck courses with high D/F/W rates and those with GPA equity gaps. Third, a historical trends dashboard provides CSU campuses with data on historic graduate rates, equity gap trends, and comparisons to other universities. Fourth, the equity gaps dashboard drills down into more details on campus-specific equity gaps and provides information on ways to narrow equity gaps.

## LoboConnect

 The third data tool that has enhanced SSU’s support of student success is LoboConnect, which is a customized version of EAB’s Navigate software that SSU launched in fall 2019 (see appendix 4 for a link to information regarding LoboConnect). LoboConnect is a web-based tool that connects students, faculty, and staff in a network of support centered on student success. LoboConnect is a centralized place for students to make advising and career center appointments, communicate with faculty and staff, and access other support services via the web or an app (which launched in fall 2020). Faculty and advisors use the system for better tracking of advisees, reports on student progress, and communications touchpoints with students.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LoboConnect Benefits for Students** | **LoboConnect Benefits for Staff/Faculty** |
| * Students can use the mobile app for easy access
* Offers quick way to schedule advising appointments
* Connects students to support services faster
* Provides appointment notifications and reminders
* Offers a new view of students’ class schedule
* Helps students find study buddies in their courses
* Offers ways to explore major options, and learn more about careers
* Provides information on resource locations, hours, contact information, and more
 | * Provides easy-to-use search functionality
* Enables referrals to connect students to a network of campus partners
* Documents appointments with students
* Provides ability to quickly generate lists of students using advanced search tools
* Creates smart student profiles
* Facilitates multimodal communication and proactive outreach
 |

LoboConnect contains top-level historical data provided by the CSU going back to 2007 and, as a result, it provides enhanced reporting and tracking capability for SSU’s institutional reports. These reports allow the campus to explore broad trends and determine key indicators, such as the minimum grade in a course (or set of courses) that is an accurate predictor of a student's success in a major. LoboConnect also has multiple analytics dashboards that allow for a quick snapshot of the student body at large and that enable easy comparison of different populations on campus (e.g., the population health dashboard). In addition, the system’s reporting capability allows for heavily customizable exports of data for use by faculty, advisors, and administrators. A few examples are provided below:

* Appointment/visit reports show all appointment summaries filed by a specific service unit, like the career center, or those written by a specific advisor. Or the report could show all summaries written about a particular student by advisors as well as different service units like LARC and the advising center.
* Intervention reports allow for the tracking of progress report campaigns and cases opened by professors who are concerned about a student's success in a class
* Student data reports allow for detailed examination of student enrollments. This has been particularly helpful in re-enrollment efforts, allowing advisors to quickly see what all of their students are enrolled in, in a single exported spreadsheet

As the system rolls out in the coming semesters, training will be provided to support faculty and staff adoption of LoboConnect.

## Engage@SSU

The fourth data tool that supports student success was launched in 2019 by SSU’s Student Affairs division. The Engage@SSU platform enables online student engagement and involvement in the co-curricular environment (See appendix 4 for a link to Engage@SSU). It also houses important sign-up forms, contests, news, and announcements from across campus. All sororities, fraternities, registered student organizations, and associated students transitioned to Engage@SSU in 2019. As of summer 2020, the system was fully adopted and the division of student affairs moved all appropriate online engagement to the new platform. Engage@SSU is currently home to over 120 student organization portals. Engage@SSU has built-in assessment and analytic tools, so that student participation and attendance data can be collected. In addition, the system allows for embedded assessment of events and programs. Data and reports from Engage@SSU allows Student Affairs staff and administrators to better align engagement opportunities for students with student interest and with the campus strategic plan.

## SSU’s Strategic Planning Tools and Continuous Improvement

 In addition to those described above, there are other data tools that assist SSU in evaluating the results of student learning and success goals. Most notably, as described in the response to WSCUC recommendation #3 above, all divisions are tracking progress on their student success goals relative to the university’s new strategic plan. Data tools that support these efforts include the Smartsheet software and Questica budgeting software.

The university’s tracking and reporting capabilities have undergone a transformation in the past three years, and a new culture of evidence-based decision-making has evolved to steer the campus forward. In the next five years, the campus will expand the communication about the data tools that are available. Because these tools are relatively new, it is important to continue raising awareness of the tools and to provide more training opportunities to users and potential users. A resource that is under development is a mapping document that describes what each data tool does and what data can be accessed via which tool. A final goal is to continue tracking and create a feedback system for users, so that the data tools can be enhanced to support user needs.

# SSU’s Follow-up Response to Recommendation #5

[Creating an IT strategic plan to improve the student experience and advance the mission and vision of the institution. (CFR 4.6)]

As described in the response to recommendation 3, SSU engaged in an extensive strategic planning process during 2017-18. In 2018-19, divisions and departments developed their own strategic plans, and those plans were implemented in 2019-20. As a part of this process, both the information technology department (IT) and the center for teaching and educational technology (CTET; formerly known as the faculty center) created strategic plans, with an aim to advance the university’s new mission and vision. Each unit’s areas of focus are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Information Technology Department (IT) is responsible for services related to university-wide infrastructure (network, wireless, and cabling) and information systems (academic affairs, student services, business services, library system, telephone system, voice-mail, Internet, web services, etc.). | The Center for Teaching & Educational Technology (CTET) supports faculty in their professional development as teachers, scholars of education, and innovators in practice. CTET provides personalized consultations and targeted workshops to train faculty on how to best use technology to improve teaching. |

SSU’s organizational structure situates both IT and CTET within academic affairs and has evolved so that the chief information officer (CIO) of IT reports directly to the provost and the director of CTET reports to the associate vice president of faculty affairs (who reports to the provost) (see appendix 5 for the academic affairs organization chart. This structure effectively creates a two-pronged, collaborative effort within academic affairs to support SSU’s technology needs for teaching, learning, and student success (See appendix 5 for a link to the academic affairs organization chart). Since WSCUC’s 2017 visit, SSU has aligned its IT and academic technology efforts to drive the new strategic plan’s priorities, mission, and vision.

## IT’s Improvement Efforts and New Strategic Plan

In December 2017, a review of SSU’s IT services was initiated to assess key issues and opportunities for improvement (see appendix 5 for a link to the IT home page). A six-person review team, comprised of two consultants and four CSU IT professionals, reviewed background materials and then spent two days interviewing stakeholders on campus to identify ways that IT services could support SSU more effectively. The findings resulted in an action plan that was communicated to the campus in February 2018. The action plan and the results of the stated initiatives are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Action Item** | **Result** |
| Establish an IT advisory group to align IT services to campus needs and prioritize project requests | SSU established a university-wide IT Advisory Group (ITAG) in spring 2018.  |
| Develop a communication plan to articulate IT priorities, projects, and processes more clearly to the campus community | ITAG worked on project assessment and prioritization in spring 2018. Projects were prioritized based on their urgency, audit-related findings, and impact. A list of IT projects was published on IT’s website in July 2018, with initial focus on Tier 1 (high priority) projects. In November 2018, a project tracking system was created in Smartsheet, mapping each project moving forward to a strategic priority on SSU’s strategic plan (see appendix 5 for a link to the IT project list).  |
| Create a plan to improve customer service and responsiveness for all IT matters, including academic technology | Clear guidelines and frequently asked questions for project requests are provided online. A project request form was created in fall 2018 to assist users with a clear process for submitting requests. The new process was communicated in summer 2018 and is clearly described on the project request form.  |
| Conduct a search for a permanent CIO | SSU launched a search in spring 2018, and a permanent CIO was hired in June 2018. Since then, the CIO hired in 2018 retired after two years, and a new CIO was hired beginning July 2020.  |

IT finalized its new strategic plan in June 2019, aligning its goals and priorities with SSU’s and Academic Affairs’ strategic plans (see appendix 5 for the link to the IT strategic plan). IT’s plan included a set of overarching guiding principles or strategies that the IT department should focus on, categorized by strategic priority. These guiding strategies are presented below:



IT’s progress across multiple strategic priorities is demonstrated with a few examples provided here, many of which directly or indirectly improve the student experience:

|  |
| --- |
| **Strategic Priority #1: Student Success** |
| **Goal** | **Tactic** | **Results Reported**  |
| Meet SSU's GI2025 graduation and retention goals, including elimination of equity gaps | Implement and support effective student success technology support for improved advising, early warning and overall student academic support | EAB technology (called LoboConnect) was procured and implemented. The tool is used to communicate with enrolled students regarding advising and other related activities, as described in the earlier response to recommendation 4. |
| Modernize SSU's teaching and learning spaces and business processes in support of student success. | Create and maintain 21st century teaching and learning classroom standards to ensure learning spaces aligned with student and curricular needs. This includes updating standards to align them with online education best practices to encourage more online offerings at SSU. | CTET and IT departments worked with academic affairs and the Academic Technology and Instructional Spaces Subcommittee (ATISS) to establish SSU standards for mediated classrooms. Through this, a $3 million investment was made to modernize classroom technology. Installation began in summer 2019, and the technology upgrades have been completed in 44 classrooms (out of 68) so far, with the remaining 24 classrooms scheduled for upgrades during 2020-21. |
| **Strategic Priority #2: Academic Excellence and Innovation** |
| **Goal** | **Tactic** | **Results Reported**  |
| Amplify and support the expression of SSU's core values and strategic priorities in our curricula. | Simplify the curriculum approval process to enable easier experimentation with possible innovations in programs and courses. | Curriculog is a new digital workflow solution that simplifies the catalog and curriculum approval process. IT provided the course data from PeopleSoft and created single sign-on (SSO) integration. |
| Migrate critical IT services to the cloud for redundancy, high availability, backup, scalability, and increased security. | Procure an Amazon Web Services (AWS) space to migrate our virtual servers to the cloud. Prioritize our services according to highest security requirements, such as PCI, HIPPA, and FERPA. | So far, IT has approximately 30 hosted environments (such as Tableau, LoboConnect, YuJa, and CSULearn), with more anticipated in the coming year. |
| **Strategic Priority #3: Leadership Cultivation** |
| **Goal** | **Tactic** | **Results Reported**  |
| Support SSU faculty and staff in their professional development and research, scholarship, and creative activities (RSCA), so they can be leaders in the community and their disciplines. | Develop and implement sustainable professional development and RSCA support plans. | CSULearn is a new CSU-wide technology that was implemented with single sign-on (SSO). It provides professional development opportunities to all faculty and staff. SkillPort was retired and the content was migrated successfully to the new platform. |
| **Strategic Priority #4: Transformative Impact** |
| **Goal** | **Tactic** | **Results Reported**  |
| Deploy SSU talent (faculty, staff, and students) for high-impact and/or community-based service, research, and engagement | Promote high-impact and/or community-based research, service, and community engagement related to local issues and the local economy (such as water quality, wine research, fire ecology, resilience, etc.) | SSU entered into a partnership to provide Internet connectivity to the North Bay for fire prevention and early detection. A microwave dish was installed and connected to the Cenic backbone to provide and project the Internet to SSU’s preserve. This service will be sent to additional microwave stations to provide cameras and information to fire officials. |

 The IT department has also achieved many other goals from its strategic plan, in service to the university’s strategic priorities, mission, and vision, as well as the student experience (see appendix 5 for a list of IT projects completed and in progress). These are being captured on the Smartsheet tool that was referenced in the response to recommendation 3. Key points of progress include:

* Completed general data protection regulation (GDPR) requirements successfully
* Implemented an anti-phishing campaign using PhishMe to raise awareness of phishing attempts (at least one campaign per semester starting in spring 2019)
* Completed level 1 data inventory in fall 2019 and follow-up clean-up is in progress
* Completed risk management standard, in compliance with CSU mandate
* Completed SSU’s information security risk assessments annually since the last WSCUC visit
* Worked with human resources to align hiring policies with inclusivity and diversification goals; since the IT strategic plan was published in June 2019, IT has conducted 11 recruitment searches all of which were posted to a variety of job sites targeting diversity in higher education
* Pledged to a diversity, equity, and inclusion commitment via Educause
* Completed IT disaster recovery plan, outlining which products would lose connectivity if power went down and what items are critical to campus to bring back up immediately
* Completed plan to resolve accessible technology initiative (ATI) compliance work, in collaboration with CTET, as the recommendations from the recent ATI Audit affect both departments

## CTET’s Improvement Efforts and New Strategic Plan

CTET provides customized consultation and workshops on instructional design and the optimal use of educational technology for teaching and learning (see appendix 5 for links to CTET’s website and services). Both faculty and students are benefitting from a transformational expansion in SSU’s academic technologies. Since WSCUC’s last visit in 2017, SSU has significantly grown its portfolio of academic technology platforms, and CTET offers training on all of them, including those shown below:



CTET has also expanded its portfolio of faculty development programs (see appendix 5 for links to CTET’s faculty development programs). In addition to academic technology support, the department offers consultation and/or training on the following topics:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Online & blended (hybrid) course development
* Conversion/creation of existing course activities into learning objects
* Creation of accessible media and instructional materials
* Making grading efficient
* Classroom management/preventing problematic behavior
* Working with challenging students
* Course curriculum design
* Writing good exam questions
 | * Interpreting student evaluations
* Reflecting on teaching for recruitment, tenure, and promotion
* Consultation on the creation of course-level learning outcomes
* Consultation for departmental program review
* Scholarship of teaching and learning
* Help with data collection and IRB protocols for educational research
* Survey design using Qualtrics for formative/summative assessment
 |

CTET finalized its new strategic plan in 2019, thereby aligning its goals and priorities with SSU’s and academic affairs’ strategic plans. The programming at CTET is designed to advance the academic excellence and innovation strategic priority and its supporting theme of ‘*embracing innovation teaching and learning practices*’. CTET’s mission is as follows: “*We conceptualize innovative teaching and learning practices broadly to include educational technology as a teaching tool, evidence-based teaching practices and techniques, and promotion of high-quality teaching to support success for a diverse student body.”* CTET’s strategic plan is shown below:

|  |
| --- |
| **Strategic Priority #2: Academic Excellence and Innovation** |
| **Goal** | **Tactics** | **Measures**  |
| Empower faculty to lead transformative learning environments with high-quality teaching to support a diverse student body and promote student success | * School & department custom workshops
* Individual instructional consultation
* Teaching-related grant support
* Faculty learning communities
* Website self-help resources & guides
 | * Number of consultations per year by School
* Number of workshop attendees
* Feedback from workshops
* Increases in faculty visits to CTET
 |
| Foster innovation in teaching and learning with technology in support of engaged learning, building communities, and promoting continuous improvement | * Canvas workshops and support for faculty
* Instructional design
* Instructional video capture and production
* Classroom technology design and support
* Technology pilots and special projects
 | * Tracking Canvas adoption/use by school & departments
* Creation of new online courses & trained faculty
* Foot-traffic for CTET drop-in support
* Faculty participation in CTET sponsored programs
* Dashboards on classroom renovation progress
 |

CTET has achieved many goals from its strategic plan, in service to the university’s strategic priorities, mission, and vision. Key points of progress include:

* Developed online course redesign materials
* Began addressing recommendations from the CSU’s Accessible Technology Initiative Audit including:
	+ Launched YuJa video software to support online teaching and accessibility standards (via captioning capability)
	+ Launched Ally software to help faculty determine the accessibility of online course materials
	+ Hired two student assistants to work with Ally pilot
* Completed transition of the campus learning management system from Moodle to Canvas
* Delivered the online and blended teaching excellence program to over 50 faculty during spring 2020
* Trained over half of the campus faculty in best practices for Canvas-based online teaching through spring workshops and consultations and Summer 2020 programming (including the summer Canvas institute which 153 faculty completed in the “live” format and another 50 completed in the self-paced format)
* Continued collaboration with IT, as all CTET projects are submitted to ITAG for review and feedback (and are verified for alignment with the strategic plan). For example, ITAG prioritized implementation of YuJa and Ally as a high-priority project for IT.
* Continued affordable learning project to reduce costs for students
* Expanded faculty participation in teaching and learning training in every school in the university, and supported a huge increase in faculty need for teaching and learning assistance overall as shown in the following chart:

## Response to COVID

In spring 2020, when SSU moved to remote instruction to deal with the public health guidelines for COVID, and during fall 2020 when we implemented a plan approved by the CSU chancellor’s office to be primarily remote, IT and CTET, as well as the university library, took on the responsibility to purchase, prepare, and distribute laptops and hotspots to students most in need through the seawolf initiative for technology equity (SITE) that has helped hundreds of students stay enrolled and complete classes through enhanced student technology support. In addition, CTET, as noted above, provided faculty development to assist faculty with learning how to teach online (see appendix 5 for a link to CTET’s “teaching through disruptions” website). Since coursework had been more than 95% face-to-face before the pandemic, these information technology and academic technology efforts represent a monumental change for the institution that was only possible with the infrastructure improvements these units made over the last three years.

# SSU’s Follow-up Response to Recommendation #6

[Creating and implementing a comprehensive diversity plan. (CFR 1.4)]

The 2017 WSCUC reaccreditation report lauded the university for its recent work in addressing diversity issues while tasking SSU to develop a diversity plan, elements of which could be developed in strategic conversations as SSU concludes its strategic planning and then embedded in the final product.

## Responding to the Increasing Diversity in Society

Sonoma State University’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has been part of campus culture since its inception (see appendix 6 for definitions of basic terms and a general timeline of SSU’s diversity efforts). Every evolutionary and innovative step reflects the campus approach to individual, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic oppression, even as the strategies shift as societal factors change.

Theoretical Framework

Campus diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts track with the theoretical framework of the National Equity Project, which has provided training to the President’s Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, Campus Climate, and Inclusion (PAC; see appendix 6 for an infographic of the theoretical framework). Within this framework, individual biases, conscious and unconscious, inform the way members of our campus community engage with other members, especially across lines of difference. These biases become baked into policies and institutions. For those who are privileged in these systems, the biases often seem natural and are reinforced consistently. For those who suffer discrimination and oppression within these interactions and systems, the biases are recognized and reinforced through each disenfranchisement. Thus, in order for one aspect of DEI work to succeed, the campus needs to be focused on all areas – policies, climate, campus values, institutional structure and processes; the disparate impact of educational requirements and policies; extracurricular support mechanisms; and administrative structures. Each area shapes and is shaped by other areas. Therefore, SSU is engaged in an approach that attempts to focus on all relevant areas at once, and in a way that acknowledges and helps shape the way they echo and reinforce each other.

While the campus has historically operated with a decentralized approach toward DEI issues, President Sakaki has prioritized DEI as central to campus strategic planning, especially with the systemwide GI2025, which is focused on closing historically persistent achievement and equity gaps. A complementary campus approach is not only boosting campus GI2025 efforts but is also creating opportunities for expanded cross-divisional collaboration and dialogue. In the wake of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the broad social unrest in the wake of continuing anti-Black violence, this dual-pronged approach promotes the core value of diversity & social justice articulated in the SSU strategic plan (see appendix 6 for links to various statements on racial justice issued by the campus since May 2020).

## Administrative and Organizational Practices

### Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

 President Sakaki hired chief of staff and associate vice president for strategic initiatives and diversity Dr. Jerlena Griffin-Desta in 2019, and she founded the office of diversity, equity, and inclusion (ODEI), housed in the office of the president (see appendix 6 for a link to the ODEI website). The vision of the office is as follows:

As a learning community, Sonoma State is dedicated to fostering a welcoming environment for students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders beyond the campus. We seek to inspire everyone in our

community to reach for the ideals of integrity, accountability, and compassion, so that we can all serve as mentors and ambassadors for social justice and constructive civic engagement.

The office serves as a central coordinating office for campus diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and includes the chief diversity officer, the center for community engagement (CCE), and the HUB cultural center (see appendix 6 for a link to the CCE and HUB websites).

### Senate Diversity Subcommittee

The SSU academic senate diversity subcommittee (SDS), which advises the academic senate on policies, programs, and evaluation of diversity-related efforts, is working with the academic programs faculty fellow for anti-racist curriculum design (see below) to discuss ways they could work together to encourage and foster classroom curriculum and pedagogies that reflect the campus commitment to diversity (see appendix 6 for the senate’s “Vision Statement” resolution). This reflects the high value that SSU places on DEI work, while simultaneously reinforcing faculty commitment to this work.

### Designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

SSU qualified for status as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in 2017 and has continued to renew its eligibility, enabling the campus to continue competing for grants to support the growing diversity of the student body. SSU’s school of education was awarded a $2.75 million grant in October 2017 to support the preparation of more Hispanic school teachers via the launch of the PUERTA program (which stands for Preparing Under-Represented Educators to Realize Their Teaching Ambitions).

In spring 2020, SSU’s chief diversity officer commissioned a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) Task Force to explore how to better serve Latinx student, staff, and faculty populations with the aim of supporting and benefiting all underserved communities.

### Strategic Plan 2025

SSU’s 2017-18 strategic planning process, which was described in the response to recommendation 3, emphasized diversity, equity, inclusion, and community. The process was guided by a commitment to three principles: inclusivity, integrity, and respect.

### Anti-Bias and Anti-Racism Training

* SSU participated in the CSU/University of California anti-bias training series based on Patricia Devine’s *Breaking the Bias Habit* model. Training sessions were designed for student leaders, senior administrators, faculty, and staff (train-the-trainers). These sessions have been carried out over 2020 in four separate cohort modules.
* Beginning fall 2020, in addition to the online website and related tools, the SSU ODEI began providing training both campus and systemwide on inclusion, bias, and other diversity-related issues.

**Curricular and Co-Curricular Programs**

### General Education (GE) Program Revision

 In fall 2017, the campus undertook a comprehensive revision of its GE program. The revision was approved by the academic senate in spring 2019, and the new program was implemented in fall 2019. One of the 13 new student learning outcomes focuses on the development of diverse cultural competencies. Specifically, students are expected to be able to *attain and apply knowledge of social power and difference in relations between self, other people, and social structures locally and nationally while honoring contributions of people of different identities*. The new GE program also requires all students to complete one critical race studies (CRS) course, as part of SSU’s long-standing commitment to the teaching of ethnic studies. CRS is an interdisciplinary field of study that seeks to understand the ways society is culturally and institutionally constituted by race and racism in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and nation.

### Co-Curricular Academic Support

The center for academic success and student enrichment (CAASE) was formed in summer 2018 to provide SSU’s underrepresented and underserved students with resources to persist and graduate. The restructuring has consolidated the following programs into one centrally located facility: disability services for students (DSS), dream center, educational opportunity program, PUERTA, seawolf scholars, and student support services (see the response to recommendation 7 below).

### Assessment and Evaluation

The campus has greatly increased its use of data tools to investigate where student achievement and equity gaps occur, so efforts can be focused on closing those known gaps. The August 2019 campus equity report is an example of the data analysis that is now supporting continuous improvements toward SSU’s GI2025 goals (see appendix 6 for a link to the diversity equity report). For example, the campus has been improving its student success metrics as a part of the CSU’s GI2025. SSU has the highest transfer student graduation rate in the CSU, and the campus is making good progress on improving the first-time, first-year student graduation rate and closing equity gaps for underrepresented and low-income students.

### Curricular Design

In September 2020, SSU created a new faculty fellow position to expand diversity efforts in curricular design. The faculty fellow for anti-racist curricular design is responsible for providing guidance on racial and social justice curriculum and supporting the work of academic departments to do curricular reform addressing student equity and achievement (i.e., student learning, enrollment, academic progress, persistence, and graduation).

### Male Success Initiative

 The program framework of the male success initiative, which SSU adopted in 2018, aims to improve the retention and graduation rates for students by providing an integrated program focused on academic support, identity development, and mentoring. The program aims to support the success of students by utilizing community and an unapologetic approach shaped by scholarship, service, and leadership.

### Native American Initiative

The Native American initiative (NAI) at Sonoma State University is focused on improved educational access for the local Native American and Indigenous community with an aim to increase the number students in this group who enroll and graduate from SSU. In the past three years, SSU has taken a multidisciplinary approach to enhancing student services focused on Native American communities, which includes the newly formed Native and Indigenous student support initiative committee, a stronger partnership with the local tribes of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria representing the Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo people, and the creation of the Native American program for student success.

### Faculty Exchanges on Social Justice

 In fall 2020, the office of academic programs launched a biweekly series of faculty exchanges, with many discussions centering on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Examples of discussion topics included: “Performative vs. Authentic Racial Justice,” “Launching the Racial Justice Canvas Page,” “So You Want to Talk About Race” book discussion, and “Systemic Equity at SSU.” These meetings have also resulted in the development of an interdisciplinary faculty working group focused on creating programming to facilitate discussions of race and anti-racism on campus.  These discussions are slated to begin in spring 2021 followed by a related common-read/common-question curriculum for the campus in fall 2021.

## Hiring Criteria

Campus hiring practices have been reviewed and improved with an eye to equity and diversity among faculty and staff. The human resources department and office of faculty affairs have offered increased training and guidance on faculty and staff recruitment and selection processes, so that search committees are well-informed about SSU’s recruitment policy, as well as affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, diversity, and unconscious bias. Human resources staff and the associate vice president for faculty affairs are available to meet with hiring managers or search committees to offer assistance throughout the recruitment process, and they assist with the crafting of position announcements, appointment on search committees, and drafting of interview questions.

## Five-Year Timeline and Goals

Between now and the next WSCUC visit in 2025, SSU will continue to honor the innovative culture that has shaped the current abundance of diversity initiatives. In addition, the campus will survey and assess SSU’s current diversity efforts, and it is likely that the results will reveal several high-impact objectives on which the campus community needs to collaboratively focus efforts. To provide the information for the anticipated campus-wide conversations about short-term and long-term diversity priorities and goals, the PAC’s priorities are to implement the following:

* A restorative justice program with the goal of keeping the Sonoma State community both whole and actively engaged in learning how to correct and heal from harmful and traumatic behaviors.
* Administration of a campus-wide climate surveyto provide key information that will help focus DEI efforts for the University
* A diversity programs and activities inventory to provide a clear picture of the work currently being done around campus climate, diversity, and inclusion at the university
* An exploration aimed at dismantling intersectional and structural hierarchiesand barriers to equity and access to build constructive relationships and transform SSU’s cultural narratives around race

SSU’s strategic plan will be updated based on the findings from these surveys and analyses, following a series of stakeholder discussions about the results and next steps.

Additional diversity-related goals for the next five (5) years include:

* Continuing the GI2025 efforts to close equity and achievement gaps
* Expanding admissions outreach to Hispanic students as well as other underrepresented students
* Continuing to integrate the ideas generated through core values discussions at the diversity and social justice world cafés from fall 2018
* Developing a racial injustice symposium series and a social justice center through the leadership of SSU’s CDO
* Increasing diversity and equity in recruitment of staff and faculty
* Continuing to build a strong and engaged campus community
* Continuing to foster anti-racist values and promote social justice
* Continuing to synchronize all main campus divisions in the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion

In addition to these initiatives, programs, events, and structural changes, SSU is working on establishing an evaluation and assessment rubric for the campus, which will not only measure the success of individual DEI efforts but will also attempt to understand the synergistic effect of multiple programs on student success, faculty and staff hiring, and overall campus well-being.

# SSU’s Follow-up Response to Recommendation #7

[Formally articulating what it means to be a SSU undergraduate or graduate student. (CFRs 1.2 and 2.2-2.4)]

Since WSCUC’s 2017 visit, Sonoma State University has gained a sharper focus on what it means to be an SSU student. Within a liberal arts grounding, an SSU student is one who earns a meaningful degree reinforced by experiential learning, interdisciplinary connections, and outward engagement, in a community committed to helping them succeed. The campus has engaged in large-scale conversations and structural changes that demonstrate the convergence of thinking that has occurred around the distinguishing features of the undergraduate and graduate student experience. Additionally, there is a greater appreciation for learning outcomes, standards, and assessment.

## General Education Reform and The Seawolf Experience

The campus established clear educational objectives for undergraduate students through a comprehensive review and reform of the GE curriculum (see appendix 7 for links to information on the GE reform process). A program review of GE was finalized in fall 2017, which resulted in recommendations for a major overhaul that would create a more intentional curriculum for students. In January 2018, a faculty retreat focused on the meaning of GE, the challenges faced by departments and students, and the pros and cons of GE models used on other campuses. Subsequently, the GE revision subcommittee (GERS) of the EPC was formed in March 2018 and was tasked with developing a new model for GE. GERS began by considering the role of GE in a student’s broader college education and development. This led the committee to develop the conceptual framework of “The Seawolf Experience,” a bird’s eye view of a lower- and upper-division college education at SSU, both inside and outside the classroom, addressed to the incoming student (see appendix 7 for links to information on the Seawolf Experience). The Seawolf Experience includes, but is not limited to, GE. Here is an excerpt from a larger narrative on this framework:

Whether you come to Sonoma State as a first-year or transfer student, the Seawolf Experience makes you part of the SSU community – people who are passionate about academic excellence, community and civic engagement, diversity, sustainability, and lifelong learning. During your first two years of college, you will lay the foundation for college success and begin to explore areas of interest. During your last two years of college, you will build on your lower-division foundation, reflect on what you have learned and where you are going, and integrate your knowledge and experiences as you begin to move toward professional and civic engagement.

With the Seawolf Experience as a foundation, GERS developed an initial statement of purpose for GE, learning goals, and learning outcomes, and then sought input from campus stakeholders about these statements and goals through meetings with faculty, staff, and students, through consultations with EPC and the GE Subcommittee, and through the circulation of a campus-wide survey. Extensive feedback from campus stakeholders was incorporated, and then GERS developed a model for GE based on goals/outcomes, campus feedback, the new strategic plan, parameters established by chancellor’s office executive orders, and models from other universities, while working to keep in mind the constraints of existing SSU programs. The proposal for the new GE model was presented to the academic senate in October 2018, went through a series of revisions, and was approved in May 2019. The statement of purpose for SSU’s new GE curriculum is as follows:

The Sonoma State General Education Program provides students an intentional, coherent, inclusive undergraduate experience across multiple disciplinary perspectives, fostering broad transferable skills and integrated, engaged learning that position students to create and participate meaningfully and ethically in our interconnected and interdependent world*.*

The new GE model includes ongoing assessment of the program’s 13 learning outcomes (see response to recommendation 2 for more on these learning outcomes). The twin assessment goals are to improve the GE program and to improve student learning to ensure that students have a unifying skills-based experience grounded in liberal arts. The assessment process is described below.

## Enhanced Focus on Graduate Students and Graduate Programs

In May 2018, the academic senate reviewed two brief summary reports on graduate faculty and graduate students, which were compiled by the graduate studies subcommittee (GSS) (see appendix 7 for a link to the reports and to the GSS website). These reports indicated two findings of note: (1) graduate students and faculty were very satisfied with the education and training received and provided by SSU, and the mentorship provided in research, teaching, and internships, and (2) there were marked deficits in funding, administrative leadership, support services, professional development, and access to resources for SSU graduate programs. The findings corresponded with the general perceptions of invisibility, under-appreciation, and lack of support provided to graduate programs on campus. To follow up on these brief reports, in fall 2018 the Senate asked the GSS to report on the state of SSU’s graduate education. Delivered in spring 2019, the report addressed four significant areas and provided the following recommendations:

1. Create an administrative and faculty governance infrastructure focusing specifically on graduate education at SSU. Ensure funding for this division with appropriate administrative leadership and operating expenses. Part of the purview of this office is to review state-support and self-support program policies and compensations to ensure equitable use of resources.
2. Create an integrated financial support system across state-supported and self-support programs that provides funding for graduate education, paid teaching and research positions, tuition fee waivers, scholarships and awards, and grant development for graduate students, so that an integrated funding package can be marketed and offered to incoming and continuing students.
3. Create an integrated graduate program development strategy for fundraising and program-specific projects.
4. Create integrated support services across state-supported and self-support programs that meet the needs of graduate students which differ in important ways from undergraduates, including career services, professional development, IT support, and mental health*.*

Since this report, much progress has been made at SSU. A half-time faculty position designated as the director of graduate studies was created in the office of academic programs, and the first director was brought on in June 2019. In addition, a full-time graduate analyst position was created and filled in June 2019. The director’s work with individual graduate programs has provided a better understanding of the diverse programmatic needs as well as shared needs across programs, leading to increased advocacy. Feedback from across the university indicates that graduate studies is on people’s radars more than before.

In spring 2020, the director of graduate studies worked with GSS to develop graduate-level learning goals which incorporate SSU’s strategic priorities (see appendix 7 for the graduate-level learning goals). The goals focus on advanced levels of critical thinking, communication, disciplinary knowledge, and professional integrity, as well as integrative learning and practical/experiential application. After receiving senate approval, these learning goals will be used for graduate program development, ultimately leading to a campus-wide definition of what it means to be an SSU graduate student. In tandem with the goals, GSS has also been formulating a statement on the graduate student identity at SSU.

Through the heightened focus on graduate studies, several other initiatives have been started. The first initiative was to develop a ‘graduate student community’ that extends beyond individual programs for a broader connection to the university as a whole. In fall 2019, SSU’s first graduate student orientation was launched (and it was offered online in fall 2020), and there is a Canvas page for graduate students that describes graduate degree requirements (broad requirements vs. individual program requirements). The first graduate student mixer was held in fall 2019. In addition, the office of academic programs added a dedicated website for graduate studies (see appendix 7 for a link to the website). A second initiative was to foster community partnerships in an effort to work towards the development of a community-based graduate assistant program. A pilot program was underway with SSU’s Master’s of Public Administration program and the City of Petaluma when the pandemic forced delays. The program will be able to resume once in-person community engagement begins again. A third initiative is to enhance the support provided to graduate students, and this has been addressed in multiple ways as follows:

* Formalized redesign to tuition waiver assignment procedure for TAs and GAs to allow early notification of programs and students and aid in recruitment
* Redesigned the graduate degree programs website and materials (and converted to digital
* Developed policies for cross-listing of undergraduate and graduate courses
* Developed academic requirement reports in Peoplesoft/MySSU for all graduate programs
* Initiated project with OIE to develop ongoing reporting and tracking for graduate programs

While Sonoma State has made substantial progress in acknowledging the importance of graduate students, integrating them more fully into the campus community, and providing structural support for their progression to degree, there is more work to be done. The plans for continued improvement in this area include:

* + - Greater effort to highlight the Sally Cassanova graduate student awards program
		- Release of the graduate studies online handbook
		- Continued program-specific work with the director of graduate studies
		- Expansion of community-based graduate assistantships
		- Work with OIE for data access to support graduate programs
		- Working to anchor extended education academic programs to home departments and the development of new programs

## Growth in Faculty Engagement in Setting Learning Objectives and Standards

 SSU has seen enhanced faculty engagement in discussions on learning objectives and standards in recent years (see appendix 7 for links to information related to faculty engagement). The January 2018 faculty retreat that focused on the GE program generated significant feedback and recognition of the need to reform the program with clearer goals and a defined assessment plan. In spring 2018, the senate approved a revision to the syllabus policy, which added detail on student learning outcomes, accessibility, and GE content. In spring 2020, the senate created a new policy for internships, to clarify the standards to be followed, as well as faculty responsibilities around internships. Faculty have also been engaged in the roll-out of the GE assessment process, starting with participation in the summer 2020 GE assessment pilot which involved the drafting of three faculty-developed rubrics and the subsequent evaluation of signature assignments for three GE learning outcomes (information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and communication). The results of this assessment will be presented to faculty governance during 2020-21 and used to create professional development workshops and revise the current rubrics and process. The campus is continuing with its assessment timeline this year, with faculty working groups developing rubrics and convening assessment teams for additional GE learning outcomes. Faculty governance is also working to finalize an assessment structure that closes the assessment loop in a meaningful way.

## Reimagined and Reinvigorated Co-Curricular Experiences and the Student Affairs Division

 SSU’s strategic planning process and associated conversations have led to a more holistic focus on the experience of an SSU student. As a result, the university established and devoted resources toward a larger, more connected support structure for students that builds community support grounded in best practices in the field of student affairs. The student affairs division was rebuilt over the past three years to resemble a more common student affairs division and to provide a co-curricular network that both complements and enhances students’ academic experiences (see appendix 7 for links related to the student affairs division). The division’s purpose statement is:

The purpose of Student Affairs at Sonoma State University is to provide services and programs that support the achievement of students' educational and personal goals and that enhance the overall student experience.

The reorganization was aimed at providing synergy in accessing student services and programs for students and to place diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of the organization. One significant change was a commitment to hiring professional advisors to collaborate with faculty and student affairs professionals, to promote enhanced collaboration and communication in support of effective student advising. A second major change involved the creation of a new unit called CAASE. As a part of this unification of services, the summer bridge program was revitalized and expanded. Additionally, student scholarship programs under CAASE have grown substantially over the past three years. A physical representation of the efforts to provide synergy in the access and utilization of student services is evidenced by the updated first floor of the university library. The renovated floor was updated and completed in spring 2020, featuring dynamic new furniture, work spaces that encourage collaboration, and a centralized service point for students to access academic support services including CAASE, academic advising, DSS, student veteran services, and peer tutoring.

Another significant change at SSU was the consolidation of writing and tutoring services in a single unit called LARC to provide a centralized location for all academic support services, including the former writing center, campus tutoring, and supplemental instruction services (see appendix 7 for a link to the LARC website). These services are a part of academic affairs and are critical co-curricular programs aimed at student success.

 Student affairs and other departments on campus have also implemented a variety of new or expanded programs and/or services to support the whole student. These include:

* The military and veteran resource center (MAVRC) was created to support current and prospective military-connected students with general academic advising, community building events, and resources. This program celebrates the unique experiences of students who are veterans, connects them with campus staff and faculty who are also veterans, and celebrates their academic achievements (see appendix 7 for a link to the MAVRC website).
* The seawolves lead leadership program was created to prepare the next generation of leaders by providing students with co-curricular and curricular opportunities to learn the knowledge and skills needed to build a better society both locally and globally (see appendix 7 for a link to the seawolves lead leadership program).
* The CARE team was launched in fall 2018 to offer supportive intervention and guidance to students who are struggling to help restore their lives academically and personally. CARE served 72 students in 2017-18, 223 students in 2018-19, and 505 students (including 111 basic needs cases) in 2019-20. The CARE team has expanded during the pandemic to include the “lobo hug” program providing case management and support to students in quarantine and/or isolation on campus due to COVID-19.
* Lobo’s food pantry provides non-perishable food items to students experiencing food insecurity. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the food pantry expanded to provide bag pick-up and delivery to students, given the lack of food available on campus.
* Counseling and psychological services (CAPS) implemented a practice of allowing unlimited therapy appointments for students in response to the need for ongoing and consistent mental health care while in college.
* A new online orientation was developed to introduce students to programs, people, and opportunities and to improve the connectivity between students as they move from the admission cycle to matriculation.
* Faculty in residence and faculty fellows have been brought on board to support (a) the gender inclusive living learning community, (b) Visionary VIBES, and (c) academic and career exploration (ACE).
* The HUB cultural center continues to provide a space for students to explore identity and identity development to support their persistence while at SSU.
* The mathematics, engineering, science achievement (MESA) program was expanded (see appendix 7 for a link to the MESA program information). The program’s goal is to increase the number of historically underrepresented students who pursue and persist in STEM-related degrees.

The goals of these programs can be found in appendix 7.

With all of these developments, student affairs has expanded its capacity to assess program outcomes. In summer 2019, the division brought in a new assistant vice president for assessment and strategic operations to ensure the continued development and structural integrity of the division as an important partner in the Sonoma State student experience. The AVP created a division-wide research and assessment committee with representatives from across the division. All committee members completed an online course in spring 2020 on leading assessment in student affairs. To date, the division has identified its primary domains and is in the process of articulating student co-curricular learning outcomes and pathways toward achieving those outcomes. Additionally, the division has developed a comprehensive program review framework and will conduct training and implementation in spring 2021 to ensure that programs are achieving their intended outcomes and to identify areas for improvement. As a result of this work and the advancement of best practices, the SSU’s student affairs division has been recognized for two years in a row by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education Magazine* and American College Personnel Association as one of the “Most Promising Places to Work in Student Affairs.”

## A Community Learning Framework

 A recently drafted community learning framework (CLF) from spring 2020 grew out of the initial plan to create institutional learning objectives (ILOs). It was recognized that the new, skills-based GE learning objectives were actually the learning outcomes that every undergraduate student should acquire (i.e., akin to ILOs) and that the campus would benefit from an overarching framework related to how the institution/community continues to learn together and evolve. Thus, a CLF was drafted to represent the four practices that form the foundation for all the campus does. The complete draft is available in appendix 7, but the four practices are highlighted here:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Practice** | **Description** |
| Academic Excellence | Our community members gain and use specialized knowledge in developing and expanding expertise in one or more fields. They value, learn from, and draw on broad, integrative knowledge from the natural, physical, and social sciences, from the humanities, and from the arts. |
| Global, Social, and Civic Responsibility | Our community members learn and actively engage the knowledge and skills to be global citizens and advance leadership capacity to bring innovative solutions to the challenges of the 21st century. |
| Integrative and Applied Learning | Our community creatively integrates and applies learning from general education, specialized fields, and the real world. |
| Holistic Success and Well-being | Our community fosters personal, professional, and social development to build resilience and support the flourishing of self and others in an inclusive environment. |

Once approved by the campus, the CLF will be used to strengthen the connection between academic and student affairs and the community at large to support student success.

## Commitment to Demonstrating Achievement of Standards for Student Learning and Success

 As described in the response to recommendation 4 on data tools, SSU is committed to measuring progress on the goals, standards, and objectives that have been set. Demonstrating the degree to which students are learning and persisting is critical to the university’s ongoing viability. This applies to institutional level analyses, such as those done for the GI2025, as well as programmatic level analyses, like those done to measure the impact of the first-year learning communities (FLC) program. This ongoing assessment culture will help the campus determine the extent to which SSU students are earning meaningful degrees grounded in the liberal arts and reinforced by experiential learning, interdisciplinary connections, and outward engagement, in a community committed to helping them succeed.