

SELF-STUDY REPORT PREPARED FOR

**THE MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

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# **Self-Study**

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by

**California University of Pennsylvania**

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## Executive Summary

### Institutional Overview

California University of Pennsylvania (Cal U) is a regional, comprehensive University located in southwestern Pennsylvania. The school was established as an academy in 1852 and evolved into a normal school by 1865, with subsequent mission and title changes in 1928 (California State Teachers College), and 1960 (California State College). After creation of the Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (State System/PASSHE) in 1983, the school became one of the commonwealth's 14 state-owned, public universities, assuming its current title of California University of Pennsylvania. It now serves about 6,800 students.

The University is located in the borough of California, in Washington County, PA, about 35 miles from Pittsburgh on the banks of the Monongahela River. The main campus consists of 98 acres, including the Phillipsburg annex and soccer complex.

Vulcan Village, Cal U's garden-style apartment complex, is located about a mile from the main campus at George H. Roadman University Park. The Roadman Park complex also includes a football stadium, an all-weather track, tennis courts, a baseball diamond, a softball facility, rugby fields, areas for intramural sports, and picnic facilities. Adjoining Roadman Park is the 96-acre SAI Farm, purchased in 2010. The parcel includes a cross country course, recreation space, large outdoor meeting pavilion, and a farmhouse that has been renovated for student meetings and retreats. Together, Roadman Park and the SAI Farm comprise the University's upper campus.

Some recent highlights:

- 1999: A new Eberly Science and Technology Center was dedicated as the home of the Eberly College of Science and Technology.
- 2004-2007: Six new residence halls were constructed to replace all previous student housing on the main campus.
- 2007: A new academic building, Duda Hall, was dedicated to replace an older building with the same name. A remnant of the previous building stands across from Manderino Library, supporting the Ascent of Humanity sculpture.
- 2009: Herron Hall reopened after a major renovation and expansion to accommodate a multi-level fitness and recreation center.
- 2010: The Student Associate Inc. (SAI) purchased the 96-acre SAI Farm, and the new Phillipsburg soccer facility opened.
- 2011: The Cal U Convocation Center opened as the home of Vulcans volleyball and basketball, and as a regional venue for corporate, entertainment, and regional athletic and scholastic events. Cal U graduation ceremonies and professional development trainings also occur at the Convocation Center.
- 2015: The Natali Student Center was rededicated after a major renovation and expansion based on input from Cal U students.
- 2019: Coover Hall reopened after a major renovation and expansion. It houses the Department of Applied Engineering and Technology, with classrooms, labs, and offices, primarily for engineering technology and studio arts programs.
- Ahead: A new science complex, currently in the design phase, is expected to be operational during the 2023-24 academic year for physical and biological science programs.

## **Academic Structure, Enrollment, and Programs**

Cal U is categorized as a “Master’s Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs, Four-year Medium, Primary Residential Institution” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. For 168 years, Cal U has been known for its educational excellence and, more recently, for its commitment to the core values of integrity, civility and responsibility. The Princeton Review has listed Cal U among the best colleges and universities in the Northeast for 15 consecutive years.

The University is organized into three undergraduate Colleges – Education and Human Services, Liberal Arts, and the Eberly College of Science and Technology – and the school of Graduate Studies and Research. Although 71% of the student population (by headcount) consists of undergraduates, the University has experienced a rapidly growing graduate and professional degree portfolio, including three professional doctorate degrees (in health science, criminal justice, and educational leadership). As of fall 2019, more than 2,400 students (35.7%) are enrolled in Cal U Global Online, which offers highly sought-after programs delivered 100% online.

Currently, 53% of 109 academic program majors are recognized by professional external accrediting agencies. Cal U’s Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)-accredited teacher education programs are part of its historic legacy and enjoy an excellent nationwide reputation. Programs in engineering technology, biology, physics, and Earth sciences are part of the University’s long-standing special mission in science and technology. Also aligned with the special mission are programs offered in other undergraduate colleges, such as commercial music technology, graphic design, technology education, and integrative STEM education.

Cal U provides an array of allied health programs including physical therapist assistant, exercise science, gerontology, radiologic technology, and nursing. Among the best-known programs in allied health at Cal U are the bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in communication disorders. Currently approved and under development is a Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

The University utilizes a variety of high-impact practices aimed at improving student retention. Learning communities, writing-intensive courses within the disciplines, internships, capstone courses, over 50 academic clubs and organizations, and undergraduate research are examples of these practices at Cal U. The Center for Undergraduate Research successfully facilitates a sustainable program of research, helps fund scholarship and creative activity at Cal U, and hosts an annual Strike a Spark Conference, which serves as a presentation format for these activities.

## **University Administrative Structure**

The Cal U administration includes the Office of the President and six major Cabinet divisions headed by vice presidents (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Finance and Administration, Enrollment Management, Communications and Marketing, and University Development and Alumni Relations). In fall 2019, Cal U employed 92 administrators and administrative support staff.


Four representative governance bodies – the President’s Cabinet, Student Government, the local APSCUF branch of the state faculty union, and the Staff Leadership Council (composed of leaders from each of four staff unions and non-represented managers) – play a role in shared governance of the institution.

## **Self-Study Process**

The self-study was prepared through a campus-wide effort over a two-year period. The University embraced the self-study process and the concept that “the process is the product” in preparation for the Middle States team visit. Under the overall direction of an Associate Provost of Accreditation and Assessment and a self-study oversight team, a steering committee with sub-committees for compliance, evidence inventory, and editing worked to guide Cal U through the self-study. Seven standards-based working groups of approximately 10 members each were convened to research and write the reports for each Middle States standard. Committee members were selected from all campus groups including faculty, administration, staff, and students, as indicated in the in the Cal U Self-Study Organizational Structure.

## Cal U Self-Study Organizational Structure

Organizational Structure	Standard I Mission & Goals	Standard II Ethics & Integrity	Standard III Design/Delivery of the Student Experience	Standard IV Support of the Student Experience	Standard V Ed Effectiveness Assessment	Standard VI Planning, Resources & Institutional Improvement	Standard VII Governance, Leadership & Administration
Co-Chair Faculty/Staff	Scott Hargraves	Sheri Boyle	Sarah Downey	Nancy Pinardi (Cabinet)	Holiday Adair	Richard LaRosa	Jason Kight
Co-Chair Administration	Steve Whitehead	Lawrence Sebek	Doug Hoover	Dan Engstrom & Ryan James	Kevin Koury	Robert Thorn (Cabinet)	Bruce Barnhart (Cabinet)
Faculty (S&T)		Tom Wickham	Thomas Wickham	Chadwick Hanna	Kimberly Woznack	Ed Matecki	Ghassan Salim
Faculty (LA)	Cassandra Kuba	Craig Fox	Michele Pagen	Mathilda Spencer	Scott Lloyd	James Bove	Andria Cencich
Faculty (EDHS)	Rebecca Maddas	Pamela Twiss	Diane Fine	Laura Giachetti	Elizabeth Gruber	Marcia Hoover	Silvia Braidic
*.*	Jean Hale	Gregory Davis	Barry McGlumphy & Kaddour Boukaabar	William Meloy	Matt Price	Adam Gill	Becky McMillen & Robert Mehalik
Student Affairs	Terry Wigle	Dawn Moeller	Diane Hasbrouck	Nancy Skobel	James Pflugh	Jamison Roth	Melissa Dunn
SUA	Ryan Barnhart	Barry Bilitski	Dori Eichelberger	Julie Osekowski & Lisa Glasser	Mandy Schnorr	Kevin Eggleston	Sheleta Camarda-Webb
Student	Commuter Council (P) Claire Pendergact (VP) Caroline Jeffries	BSA Selena Montijo (Res Hall Asst.) Destiny Swan (Greek Life) Thomas Zupan (VP Comp. Club)	S Athletic Council Chad Livingston (Football) Madeleine McKenna (Volleyball)	S Activities Board Miranda Anderson Edward Kuntz	Grad Office Susan Fancsali SAI Grad Rep. Jordan Lockhart	I Res Hall Council (P) Sydney Holley (VP) Reginald Surpris	SGA Seth Shiley Amanda Considine

 **MSCHE Steering Committee** includes the **Working Group Co-Chairs** (plus the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, a four-member Self-Study Oversight Team and a member of the Council of Trustees.

**Compliance Committee:** **Ayanna Lyles and Brenda Fredette (Co-Chairs)**, Heidi Williams, John Burnett, Donna Wright, Brian Cunningham, Dennis Carson

**Evidence Inventory Committee:** **Loring Prest, Ryan Sittler, Joseph Zisk**, Jon Kallis, CJ DeJulius

**Self-Study Editors:** **Christine Kindl, Melanie Blumberg, Laura Tuennerman**

### Intended Outcomes and Key Findings

Intended outcomes identified for the self-study process:

- Demonstrate that Cal U meets the MSCHE Accreditation Standards and Requirements of Affiliation – Outcome Achieved.
- Develop an action plan to integrate (where appropriate) discussions of Institutional Priorities within the self-study report – Outcome Achieved.
- Develop and submit a “Verification of Compliance Report” in the Standard II, Criterion 8 evidence inventory – Outcome Achieved.
- Create a viable digital evidence inventory aligned with MSCHE Standards – Outcome Achieved.
- Plan and implement university-wide assessment at Cal U – Outcome Achieved.

- Identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement and innovation that inform Cal U's next Strategic Plan – Outcome Achieved.

The key findings (strengths and opportunities for improvement) for each of the seven standards are summarized below.

### **Standard I: Mission and Goals**

California University defines its mission and purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The five stated goals, 17 objectives, and 50 success measures of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan are clearly linked to mission and specify how the institution is fulfilling its mission. Data from the 2019 Strategic Plan assessment indicates progress toward fulfilling our mission.

#### **Strengths**

- Proactive steps have been taken to improve financial sustainability in our current climate of decreasing enrollments.
- Overall achievement of the 50 strategic success measures between 2017 and 2019 increased 50% and partially achieved results increased 33%. Overall, 70% of the 50 success measures were achieved or partially achieved.
- Strategic level assessment, once considered a weakness, is now growing in strength as demonstrated by incremental improvements each year since hiring a full-time Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, a full-time director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the acquisition of a digital assessment data management system (Nuventive).

#### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Use Nuventive to incorporate the assessment of strategic goals, objectives, and success measures into the annual assessment cycle. *Assessment Plan* and *Results Reports* submitted by designated leaders, to facilitate a systematic annual evaluation of the Strategic Plan.
- Merge the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Office of Institutional Research into one complementary unit to leverage the strengths of both and provide better data and improved institutional effectiveness throughout the University.
- Develop an institutional funding model to sustain and improve resources (personnel, budget and data) for managing the revised General Education, annual and periodic program assessment processes.
- Decrease the number of success measures in the next Strategic Plan to better focus on critical measures that can have the greatest impact on achievement of strategic objectives and goals. Also, consider increasing benchmarks for achievement to facilitate better and more focused or innovative efforts to obtain results.

### **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**

Cal U is driven, and inspired by, its core values of integrity, civility, and responsibility. The institution is truthful to its mission and values, and it provides the best possible learning and working environment. Cal U strives to remain compliant with local, state, and federal regulations and policies, and works to effectively communicate these policies in a transparent manner throughout the campus community.

#### **Strengths**

- Policies and procedures are in place to help guide the University as it works to achieve its mission, honor commitments, and adhere to union contracts.
- The University secures academic freedom and freedom of speech by educating faculty, students, and staff through trainings, publications, and policies.

- The University makes every effort to recruit a diverse student, faculty, and staff population. It works to create and ensure a campus that is open and welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds. Student Affairs provides timely and issue-oriented diversity programs open to the entire campus community.
- Cal U is committed to providing access to high-quality education and has been able to do this at an affordable cost.
- Cal U fulfills requirements pertaining to environmental safety hazards, Title IX, and federal research funding.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Evaluate the guidance and policies that govern conflicts of interest; enhance accountability for noncompliance; and establish what should be in place to identify and manage risks.
- Improve the transparency of University management decisions for public accountability.
- Strengthen internal communications across campus and more effectively disseminate information about rights, policies, and procedures.
- Ensure full use of the results of the HEDS Diversity and Equity Climate Survey by establishing a standing committee responsible for administering the survey, analyzing the data, developing interventions to address any issues emerging in the results, and assessing the effectiveness of these interventions. The Climate Survey provides the means for the University to assess its campus climate and take steps to ensure that issues impacting Cal U are confronted and ameliorated.

### **Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

Cal U designs and delivers academic student learning experiences and support services characterized by rigor and relevance consistent with higher education expectations. Academic programs and services at Cal U are aligned with the strategic mission of providing a high-quality, student-centered education that prepares an increasingly diverse community of lifelong learners to contribute responsibly and creatively to regional, national, and global societies.

#### **Strengths**

- As a result of policies and a carefully designed standardized search process, the faculty at Cal U are highly qualified with over 93% of tenure-track and tenured faculty holding doctorates in their discipline of expertise, or State System-approved terminal degree equivalencies.
- Cal U students are provided with excellent academic services from dedicated academic support staff. Each of these areas is actively engaged in periodic assessment to facilitate improvement of student success in their respective service areas.
- Institutional effectiveness, an area once considered a weakness for the University, is now a growing strength. Cal U has demonstrated incremental improvements in annual, periodic program review and General Education assessment each year since hiring a full-time Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, a full-time director of Institutional Effectiveness and an assistant to the director of Institutional Effectiveness, and acquiring a State System-supported sustainable assessment data management system (Nuventive).
- Cal U continues to validate rigor and relevance in its academic programs through external national certification and accreditations. Currently, 53% of the academic majors have earned national accreditations, and the University continues to seek additional program accreditations where appropriate.



## **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Create a specific goal for the next Strategic Plan to improve the culture of assessment at Cal U with three outcomes: sustainability of OIE personnel and assessment data, 100% compliance rates for submission of annual *Assessment Plan* and *Results Reports* from all academic program and administrative service units, and 100% compliance rates for submission of periodic State System program reviews.
- Provide ongoing professional development regarding assessment and accreditation for all administrative and academic personnel.
- Collaborate with the State System and other System universities to obtain system-wide licenses for digital experience management (Qualtrics preferred) and curriculum inventory management systems to better support faculty research, service area assessment processes, and curricular tracking/approval processes.
- Develop and implement a process for assigning academic advisors to new students, with a unit assessment outcome of achieving assigned advisors for 100% of new students each academic term.
- Collaborate through the governance process to develop an effective program evaluation and prioritization process to evaluate and rank academic programs, in order to inform program reduction decisions that improve institutional sustainability.
- Reinvest a significant portion of program prioritization cost savings to retrain displaced faculty; develop new, relevant programs; and strengthen the quality and sustainability of remaining programs.

## **Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience**

Cal U commits to student retention, persistence, and graduation through a coherent and effective student success support system sustained by qualified professionals. These efforts are guided by strategic goals and success measures to enhance academic excellence, academic experiences, the quality of student life, and a culture of civility and inclusiveness.

### **Strengths**

- Positive relationships between freshmen engagement in academic success programming (S4S, peer mentoring, and academic counseling) and higher semester GPA averages and freshman-to-sophomore retention rates.
- Higher mean GPAs, (almost 10%) among Student Affairs Panhellenic organization members compared with the overall student body; 35% of students supported by the Office for Students with Disabilities achieved above a 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the Spring 2019 semester.
- Positive impact on student success achieved by Academic Tutoring and Support Services (Writing Center, Reading Clinic, STEM Assistance Laboratory, and Tutoring Center) and a federally funded TRIO program.
- Positive impact of Athletics Academic Success programming, which facilitated a 3.16 GPA across all sports during the past three semesters and during the last 10 years, a four-year graduation rate of 82.8%.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Provide ongoing assessment training for administrative and academic personnel working in support areas for the student experience.
- Recognize the growing mental health challenges that students face and ensure that adequate staffing is available in the Counseling Center.
- Increase student engagement to enhance student experiences by expanding the leadership

program offered through Student Affairs and developing co-curricular mapping of experiences offered through Student Affairs.

- Merge academic student support services (STEM Assistance Lab, Writing Center, Reading Clinic, and the Tutoring Center) into one central location. This would create a centralized and comprehensive learning entity (“Vulcan Learning Commons”) coordinating academic services supporting student retention and success.
- Conduct a systems audit of the functions in the Office of Academic Success to analyze its effectiveness and efficiencies. This includes resource allocation, processes, personnel, and outcomes.

### **Standard V: Institutional Effectiveness Assessment**

The Cal U institutional effectiveness leadership team evaluated strategic, annual, State System program review and General Education assessment processes and concluded these processes were not systematic, meaningful, useful or efficient; thus, not sustainable. During the past two years, the leadership team revised and implemented a more sustainable annual, General Education, and program review processes and provided recommendations for improving the strategic assessment process. The University now is more confident that Cal U students are accomplishing educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution’s mission, and appropriate expectations.

#### **Strengths**

- Cal U instituted a system of assessment that is sustainable, efficient, and cost effective.
- A core set of assessment-savvy faculty and administrators embrace the value of assessment and are working with others throughout the institution to assist in developing assessment activities.
- The director of Institutional Effectiveness, in conjunction with the institutional effectiveness leadership team, organizes and sustains the assessment process.
- The institutional assessment process encourages self-reflection among all involved and strives for continuous improvement.
- The assessment process is flexible and encourages/assists units with the development of appropriate assessment plans that work for them, and provide the needed information for programmatic improvement.

#### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Ensure that initial professional development orientations for new full-time and part-time faculty support best practices in teaching and learning, pedagogical training, and classroom/program level assessment techniques and processes.
- Develop a partnership between the five institutional assessment committees and the Teaching and Learning Center to identify needs and opportunities for professional development that will help departments build and institutionalize their assessment practices.
- Expand the University assessment website to include information related to teaching andragogy, classroom assessment techniques, classroom management, effective lecturing, course redesign, and Cal U’s learning management system.
- Develop a program mapping initiative to ensure that all departments have documented course alignment with program outcomes.
- Develop a funding model to ensure continuation of the General Education assessment and improve campus processes so that General Education SLOs are more effectively communicated throughout the University and used more widely for

institutional planning.

- Task deans and department chairs with responsibility for supporting and reinforcing implementation and documentation of improvement activities identified in Assessment Action Plans.
- Integrate accountability for assessment into position descriptions, appointment letters, and management evaluation forms.

### **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

Cal U believes that continuous feedback and systematic improvement are the hallmarks of an effective institution. Cal U has practices in place to meet the institutional goals set forth in its Strategic Plan, has comprehensive budget and planning measures, and will begin implementing changes outlined in the Campus Master Plan. Development of the Campus Master Plan allowed Cal U to look into the future and plan for facility and operational needs and challenges confronting institutions of higher education today. The strategic master plan, reducing operational expenditures by nearly \$3 million of the next five years, will assist in right-sizing the University through demolishing older infrastructure and more effectively utilizing buildings.

#### **Strengths**

- Cal U has been aggressive over the past few years in reducing expenses to combat the ongoing decline in tuition revenues, with sizeable reductions in employee complements within the institution's service delivery and support units.
- The University has been bold in its strategic enrollment management, brand awareness and management, outsourcing of University operations, effective student onboarding, and military recruitment.
- Under the direction of a new vice president, the Office of Enrollment Management was created through a reorganization of existing staff, with a goal of better coordinating the full scope of Cal U's strategic enrollment and student success efforts. It comprises the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Success, and Career and Professional Development, plus the Welcome Center and Student Orientation.
- A new Customer Relationship Management system (CRM), Slate, was launched at Cal U to provide faster, better, and more consistent customer services for prospective students.

#### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Improve documentation of the feedback loop for processes, assess changes, and systematically update these processes based on data. This is important to ensure transparency in the decision-making processes and systematic changes occurring through the PASSHE System Redesign.
- Create an integrative governance body, such as a University Senate, to facilitate open discussions with faculty, staff and students on budget planning, enrollment management and recruitment efforts, as well as other University matters. Through this body, enhance transparency and permit feedback from all campus constituents for decision-making processes.
- Utilize the PASSHE Functional Cost Tool to analyze departmental return on investment (ROI) and to evaluate academic and nonacademic program contributions. This recommendation is important to determine program viability and is essential to operating under sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices, one of the three key initiatives used to assure the success of the institution.

### **Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration**

Since the last Self-Study in 2010, Cal U has experienced significant changes in administration, with a new president, new provost, two new vice presidents, a new Cabinet-level position (vice president for Enrollment Management), three new associate vice presidents in Academic Affairs, six new academic deans over these years (two in Liberal Arts, two in Science & Technology, two in the Graduate

School), and a new dean of Admissions. To their credit, these new leaders are making significant contributions to the mission and goals of the University. Also, a poorly functioning governance system (University Forum) was replaced with a revised governance system, recommended by an internal Task Force on University Shared Governance in fall 2015. The University has maintained its commitment to a governance model that emphasizes shared communication between faculty, staff, students, and administration for informed administrative decision-making.

### **Strengths**

- The new shared governance process facilitates improved communication between University administration, faculty, staff, and the student body.

The University recognizes that diversity of opinion is essential to a culture of inclusion and accountability and is committed to continuous improvement of governance and communication.

- The quality and stability of Cal U's senior leadership team and the relationship between senior leadership and University employees, particularly the faculty and the faculty union, are significantly better than when the previous president held office.
- Cal U's current president (Geraldine M. Jones) is a valuable leader. She brings many years of experience at every level of the academic enterprise. Her 44 years in academia and strong relationships built during that time serve her and the institution well during difficult times in higher education.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Utilize a solution such as a "Shared Governance Decision-Making Matrix Tool" to enhance communication around shared governance and address AAUP Governance Survey results indicating a faculty and staff perception of weakness in institutional communication. This tool would display the roles of various groups involved in making key academic and financially oriented decisions.
- The AAUP governance survey should be administered biennially to monitor changes in attitudes and perceptions about the university shared governance to inform improvements with the process.
- Employ the Matrix Tool to facilitate improved assessment of the governance model. Periodically survey all governance stakeholders to determine if the mechanisms of shared governance are effectively contributing to decision making at Cal U.
- Mitigate existing governance silos (e.g., academic, staff, student government) by creating a strategic-level integrative governance committee, such as a University Senate, capable of deliberations regarding important, university-wide issues. An integrative committee within the governance model could also strengthen the link between university-wide assessment and the existing Planning and Budgeting Committee as expected by RA 10.

## STANDARD I

# Mission and Goals

*The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.*

### WORKING GROUP

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### INTRODUCTION

This initial chapter of the Self-Study Report documents the ways in which Cal U defines its character and individuality with a clearly articulated mission and goals evaluated as part of an institutional effectiveness process. This chapter will be organized by the four Standard I Criteria for Accreditation, Requirements of Affiliation (RAs) 7 and 10, and the four Institutional Priorities (IPs) identified in the May 2018 Self-Study Design Report. The format for evidence inventory exhibits is: Standard (Roman).Criterion (Arabic).sequence within Criterion (Arabic) Example: (I.1.1)

### CRITERION 1

This criterion addresses realistic goals, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with the mission. The narrative provides evidence of clearly defined mission and goals developed through collaborative participation, formally approved through institutional governance, addressing external contexts and constituencies, guiding campus decision-making, publicized and known by the campus community, informing scholarly inquiry and creative activity, and are periodically evaluated for public consumption.

#### Clearly Defined Mission and Goals

The vision of the Cal U 2015-20 Strategic Plan (I.1.1) is aligned with Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (State System/PASSHE) Strategic Plan 2020 (I.1.2), exemplifying "academic excellence, innovation, service, personal growth and social justice for all" (I.1.1, pg. 3). The stated Cal U mission is to "provide a high quality, student-centered education that prepares an increasingly diverse community of lifelong learners to contribute responsibly and creatively to the regional, national, and global society, while serving as resource to advance the region's cultural, social, and economic development" (I.1.1, pg. 3).

#### Collaborative Participation

A University Strategic Planning Committee was created by President Geraldine M. Jones in early 2015 to assist with the development of the Strategic Plan. The committee (I.1.1, pg. 4) was a diverse group consisting of administration, faculty, staff, and students [C1a]. During the spring of 2015, the committee developed the mission, vision, and five strategic goals (I.1.1, pg. 5) and during the summer of 2015, a sub-group of the committee worked to define 17 objectives and 50 success measures (I.1.1, pages 6-14) of the Strategic Plan. These elements are aligned to three key initiatives to assure the success of the University: 1 – enhancing the academic excellence and experience of our students, 2 – operating with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices, and 3 – achieving optimal enrollment in these challenging times.

The stages of development for the 2015-20 Strategic Plan included a SWOT Analysis (I.1.3), presentation of the SWOT analysis with the campus community, the development and refinement of

vision and mission statements, and the establishment of the goals, objectives, and success measures. Sixty-two percent of the Strategic Plan success measures address external contexts and 38% address external contexts [C1b]. Also, 28% of success measures support scholarship, inquiry and creative activity [C1e].

### **Formal Approval**

During the Fall 2015 semester, stakeholders were consulted to contribute with the review and revision of the plan through structured disseminations and discussions with all governance levels. Included were academic department and administration service units, representative union “Meet and Discuss” sessions, college council meetings, student government, cabinet meetings, and the highest University governing body; the Council of Trustees (COT). The final Strategic Plan was submitted and approved [C1c and RA 7] at the December 2015 COT Quarterly Meeting (I.1.4).

### **Publicized and Known by the Campus Community**

The mission, goals, and success measures of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan have been publicized and are widely known by stakeholders [C1f]. During the development of the plan, the Office of Communications and Public Relations assisted the Strategic Planning Committee during the internal review and comment phase by working with University Technology Services to place a draft copy of the plan on the University intranet.

Once revised and approved, the Strategic Plan was publicized and later archived on a public-facing University website (see Archived Strategic Plan Website (I.1.5)). The Strategic Plan was retained on the 2018 redesigned Cal U website with a direct link on page 5 of the Resources for Faculty and Staff Webpage (I.1.6). The President’s Office promoted the Strategic Plan at both faculty/staff and student convocations.

### **Informs Decision-making**

The process of including governance entities in the review, revision, and campus-wide communication of the Strategic Plan to inform and revise university-wide decision-making policies and processes (e.g., curriculum proposals, assessment plans, travel requests, purchase requisitions, finding in support of scholarly and creative activity, etc.) to align with mission, goals and success measures of the plan [C1d]. These initiatives combined with the development of a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness at Cal U (see Standard III, Criterion 1) comprise the four IPs of the Cal U self-study.

## **CRITERION 2**

The University’s goals are appropriate to higher education and consistent with the mission. The narrative will discuss how the Strategic Plan goals and objectives help the institution achieve its mission.

### **Mission and Goals: Context of Higher Education (RA 7)**

Cal U is categorized as “Master’s Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs, Four-year medium, primary residential” institution located in rural Pennsylvania about 35 miles southwest of Pittsburgh. The school was initially established as a teacher preparation academy in 1852 and evolved into a normal school by 1865 with subsequent mission and title changes in 1928 (California State Teacher’s College), and 1960 (California State College). After the creation of the State System in 1982, the school became one of the Commonwealth’s 14 public universities; assuming its current title as California University of Pennsylvania with an historic mission in teacher education and a special mission in science and technology.

With a headcount enrollment of approximately 6,800, the University draws most of its enrollment from the seven surrounding counties, and attracts students from all 50 states and approximately 33 countries. Cal U has also historically fulfilled an access mission, providing opportunity for students, including those who are underprepared academically and/or financially, to achieve a higher education credential. The University’s traditional population includes a high percentage of first-generation

students (34-36%), many who are Pell Grant-eligible (about 42%). Approximately 19% of students are classified as underrepresented minorities (URM) and 54% are female.

Over 75% Cal U's enrollment are undergraduate students, but the University experienced growth in the School of Graduate studies and Research professional degree portfolio, including four professional doctorate degrees (Doctor of Health Science, Doctor of Criminal Justice, Doctor of Physical Therapy, and Doctor of Education). As of the Fall of 2019, the School experienced a strong enrollment of nearly 2,000 students, many through its Global Online (GO) initiative, offering highly sought undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs in a 100% online format. Cal U's graduate programs lead the State System in graduate degrees awarded.

Currently, 53% of 109 academic program majors are recognized by Professional External Accrediting Agencies (I.2.1), and Cal U's 19 Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accredited teacher education programs are part of the historical legacy. Narrative in Standard III, Criterion 8 highlights the robust teacher education Quality Assurance System. Programs in engineering technology (e.g., electrical, computer, mechatronics), biology, physics, and earth science within the Eberly College of Science and Technology are part of the University's long-standing "special mission" in science and technology. Other examples include Commercial Music Technology and Graphic Design in the College of Liberal Arts, and Health Science and Integrative STEM Education in the College of Education and Human Services.

### Goals Clearly Linked to Mission

Goals, objectives, and success measures were developed to improve the quality of education, improve the success rates of less-prepared students, and achieve optimal enrollment to address challenges to the financial health of the University. These challenges are the result of a decade of demographic enrollment decline and a strengthening regional economy where many high school graduates are opting to enter the workforce directly from high school. Financial challenges are also enhanced by a significant increase in annual capital debt payments due to the aggressive implementation of a robust master plan by the previous president during a time of weaker economic conditions and rapidly growing enrollment and revenue.

During the lead-up to the Strategic Plan, President Jones challenged the University community to strengthen the historic teaching mission and student support services within an environment of diversity, civility, and inclusiveness to improve the quality of student life during and after graduation. She also encouraged the development of additional degree programs in high-growth occupations and to institute better fiscal operating practices designed to improve enrollment, meet financial obligations, and keep tuition, fees, and student debt as low as possible.

Three key initiatives: enhancing the academic experience of our students, operating in sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices, and the achieving optimal enrollment in these challenging times, are directly tied to five strategic goals displayed in Table I.1.

**Table I.1: 2015-20 Strategic Plan goals**

Goals	2015-20 Strategic Goals
1	Enhance the academic excellence and experience of our students.
2	Operate using sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices.
3	Create a transformative learning and working environment that promotes diversity through a culture of civility and inclusiveness.
4	Serve in the areas where we live and learn through the Commonwealth, the region, the nation, and the world.
5	Continue to enhance the quality of student life.

### Achievable Goals and Objectives

For Cal U, optimal enrollment is defined as establishing an enrollment number based on classroom space at 90% plus capacity, residence halls at 90% plus capacity, and faculty FTE workload at 90% plus capacity. Four success measures (from Goals 1 and 2 of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan) called for adding at least five new academic programs in high-growth occupations, increasing market share in

the five-county catchment area, increasing scholarships, and developing and implementing a Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) (1.2.2), which includes the development of new academic programs and delivery modes. These success measures were achieved as displayed on pages 1 – 3 of the Cal U 2015-20 Strategic Plan Assessment Snapshot (1.2.3). The enrollment management team is currently drafting a new five-year SEP to be finalized in the Spring of 2020. This plan will focus on improving success measures that failed from the 2015-20 University Strategic Plan, displayed in the Assessment Plan Snapshot.

Other measures are needed to address the financial climate and achieve optimal enrollment. During the past five years, the University proactively reduced non-faculty staff by 22.3% and non-represented administrators by 17.3% to “right-size” those areas of the workforce to better align with enrollment losses. Some non-faculty staff have also had to take on multiple roles to maintain programmatic and service areas.

During this period, the faculty FTE grew by 2.4% due in part to the focus on developing new academic programs and a reluctance to evaluate, prioritize and reduce the number of outdated low-performing programs. However, the revised State System periodic Academic Program Review Template (1.2.4) described in the Standard III Criterion 1 narrative, includes performance evaluation measures based on the Robert C. Dickeson Program Evaluation and Prioritization Model (1.2.5). The revised process also utilizes a more inclusive Program Review Procedures and Timeline (1.2.6). Academic Affairs has also been proactive in right-sizing class schedules and reducing discretionary faculty workload releases. These actions are designed to incrementally achieve an optimal faculty FTE workload at Cal U.

Additionally, the State System embarked on a Process to Redesign (1.2.7) itself in response to “an array of enrollment and fiscal challenges” confronting State System universities. Accomplishments to date include quicker access to new programs through a more direct approval process; the elimination or revision of outdated, unnecessary, or burdensome policies; and additional policy changes providing greater flexibility for universities to better meet the needs of students.

One component of the redesign requested all State System schools to develop five-year “Sustainability Plans” to better address enrollment and revenue challenges. Cal U’s plan, still in development, includes workforce reductions, building demolitions, aggressive student recruiting plans, and modest tuition increases with a significant percentage of the tuition increase allocated to increasing student scholarships. Portions of the Cal U Sustainability Plan aligned with the current University master plan are being initiated to right-size the University facility footprint to achieve optimal enrollment through effective space utilization, with a planned demolition of seven end-of-life-cycle physical facilities (including five classroom buildings).

The University recently completed an \$11 million renovation of the Coover Hall technology building to house the Applied Engineering and Technology Department and recently added Mechatronics Engineering Technology program. All funding for this project was provided by the PA Department of General Services (DGS). The estimated cost to plan and demolish the end-of-life buildings is \$16-17 million and will also be funded by DGS. Two of the buildings, Frich biological sciences and the University’s 1958 physical science building, will be consolidated into a new \$44 million science complex. Funding for the design phase has been provided by DGS and the project is expected to be constructed and operational during the 2023-24 academic year.

Other capital renovation projects on campus are currently underway, including a reprogram of a campus residence hall to accommodate moves associated with the building demolitions. These projects will be funded through a variety of means, including Cal U E&G funds, Cal U plant reserves, and possibly from Commonwealth Key ‘93 (deferred maintenance) funding. The capital renovation processes are designed to incrementally achieve optimal classroom and residence hall capacity.



## **The Institution Fulfills its Mission (RA 7 and 10)**

These 2015-20 Strategic Plan and current actions are directly related to the University's efforts to achieve optimal enrollment based on reducing current classroom capacity, residence hall capacity, and faculty FTE workload capacity in these challenging times to achieve strategic sustainability. The strategic mission and plan are periodically evaluated [C.1g]. The initial evaluation occurred during the Fall of 2016 and was included on pages 12 - 26 of the 2017 Middle States Monitoring Report (1.2.8). The most recent evaluation of the Strategic Plan occurred during the Fall 2019 semester and is summarized in the Cal U 2015-20 Strategic Plan Assessment Snapshot (1.2.3). In that evaluation, fifty Strategic Plan success measures: nineteen (Goal 1), ten (Goal 2), seven (Goal 3), five (Goal 4), and nine (Goal 5) were evaluated to determine if the institution fulfills its mission. The analysis of these assessments is presented in Criteria 3 and 4 of this chapter.

### **CRITERION 3**

This criterion addresses student learning and other outcomes related to institutional improvement and the assessment of mission and goals to determine if they are relevant and achievable. The narrative will discuss how goals are focused to enhance the student learning experience and achievement, address the full range of services offered by the institution to ensure education of its students, and lead to institutional improvement.

Cal U recognizes the importance of the development, implementation, and periodic assessment of a strategic plan with a relevant mission and goals appropriately aligned with collaboratively defined outcomes and success measures to determine if strategic goals are being met, whether the goals are relevant, and continue to be appropriate during these changing times. Strategic institutional assessment for the 2015-20 Strategic Plan occurred on a periodic basis (2017 and 2019).

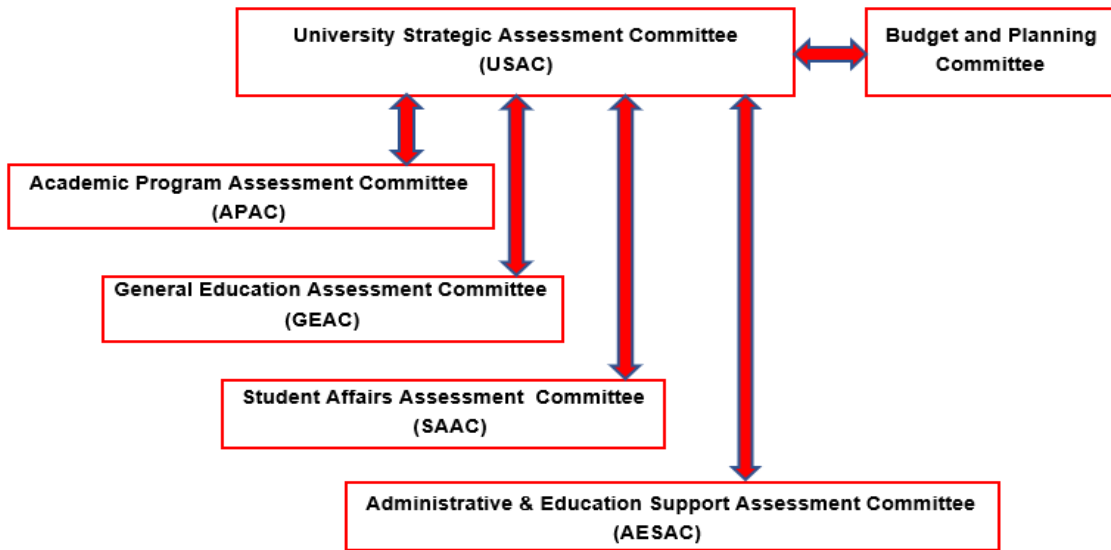
#### **Components of the Cal U Strategic Assessment Model**

The components of the Cal U strategic assessment model during the 2014-15 academic year were a diverse campus-wide Strategic Planning Committee chaired by an associate vice-president for Academic Affairs. Once the plan was developed, approved, and communicated to constituents campus-wide, the committee was disbanded. In 2017, a decision was made to create a job description for an additional associate vice-president (AVP) with primary responsibility for university-wide assessment and accreditation.

The new AVP arrived in August of 2017 and began creating processes to prepare for the 2020 Middle States reaffirmation process, including the creation of a highly qualified Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Team to evaluate and improve university-wide institutional effectiveness processes and procedures. The AVP reviewed recommendations by the 2010 Middle States Self-Study visiting team and monitoring reports since that reaffirmation visit to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement, including the recommendation for a full-time assessment administrator. This position was requested and on-boarded in April of 2018.

The addition of a full-time assessment director enabled assessment to be centralized with administrative management into an Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), thus adding to its systemization and organization. The director also serves as the communication conduit for the assessment process to campus and non-campus stakeholders. The AVP and assessment director also added a highly qualified faculty assessment liaison, assistant to the director, graduate assistants, and five assessment-related committees to inform and evaluate assessment processes throughout the University as displayed in Figure I.1 see Standard III).

Figure I.1: University-Wide Assessment Committee Structure



The University Strategic Assessment Committee (USAC) is charged with strengthening University assessment processes, and unlike “one-and-done” service of the 2014-15 Strategic Planning Committee, USAC was created for continuous, ongoing operation. The mission of the USAC is to create a culture of data-based continuous improvement across the University with a focus on strategic assessment. The Committee collaborates with University leaders and assessment committees to fulfill ten USAC Roles and Responsibilities (I.3.1). USAC aligns outcome-based assessment processes with the University Strategic Plan and assessment committees to ensure that assessment systems are implemented and integrated with the University planning and budgeting process (RA 10). An example USAC Presentation (I.3.2) linking assessment to planning and budgeting is provided from the Office of Student Success. USAC membership includes members of the Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Team, members of the President’s Cabinet, associate vice-presidents, deans, and program assessment leaders.

Prior to the creation of the OIE, the University implemented and assessed the Strategic Plan through the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) with an ad hoc committee consisting of an associate provost, the Director of Institutional Research, and a faculty member. This committee provided the initial assessment of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan discussed in the Cal U 2017 Middle States Monitoring Report (I.2.5).

### Strategic Goals and Objectives

The five goals of the Cal U Strategic Plan were designed specifically to improve institutional effectiveness, better focus on student learning and the achievement of related outcomes, facilitate institutional sustainability, and strengthen the range of services offered to facilitate student success consistent with the mission of the institution. The strategic goals have 17 related outcomes which are displayed in Table I.2.

**Table I.2: Strategic Plan objectives**

Goals	Objectives
1	1.1: Ensure competitive excellence in all programs and services. 1.2: Increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates in URM and underserved groups. 1.3: Engage faculty & staff in research-based practices & innovative instruction to enhance student learning. 1.4: Promote and expand High-Impact Education Practices. 1.5: Enhance academic support services through optimizing information technology (IT) infrastructure. 1.6: Enhance academic support services through optimizing facilities and infrastructure.
2	2.1: Develop a culture of accountability and improvement through university-wide assessment. 2.2: Develop a Strategic Enrolment Plan. 2.3: Develop and strengthen funding strategies.
3	3.1: Develop and implement a plan to ensure diversity and social equity via responsibility and inclusiveness. 3.2: Strengthen and develop partnerships with programs and events supporting diversity and inclusion. 3.3: Expand opportunities to enhance cultural and global experiences.
4	4.1: Continue to partner with local and regional entities to promote educational opportunities and prosperity. 4.2: Create and cultivate reciprocal relationships with alumni, families, corporations, and foundations.
5	5.1: Develop a comprehensive plan to integrate academics with student life programming. 5.2: Integrate leadership, career preparedness, civic engagement, and other critical life programs with students. 5.3: Ensure the safety and security of all members of the campus community.

Fifty success measures were developed to determine the effectiveness of the strategic goals and objectives from periodic assessments (2017 and 2019). Twenty-one success measures support student learning, 12 support institutional effectiveness, 22 support institutional sustainability, and 19 support services to facilitate student success. Many of the success measures apply to multiple categories.

#### **CRITERION 4**

This criterion addresses periodic assessment of mission and goals to determine if they are relevant and achievable. The narrative will focus on the two periodic assessments of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan, achieved outcomes, and a determination of relevance for the mission and goals of the Strategic Plan.

The 2017 assessment provided data for 24 (48%) of the 50 strategic success measures linked to the 17 objectives of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan that were either achieved or partially achieved. Twenty-six (52%) of the success measures were not measured at that time due to a lack of data or failure in achieving annual benchmarks included in those measures.

The positive (achieved and partially achieved) success measures from the 2017 assessment of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan are summarized in Table I.3. The 24 success measures are organized by their related goals and include 18 green coded measures denoting achievement and six yellow-colored measures denoting partial achievement.

**Table I.3: Cal U 2015-20 Strategic Plan assessment achievements (2017)**

Cal U 2015-20 Strategic Plan Assessment Achievements (2017)		
Goals	Success Measures <b>Achieved</b> or <b>Partially Achieved</b>	Outcome
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measure participation in Career Advantage.</li> <li>Develop five new programs in the next five years that directly respond to high-growth occupations. (Two programs developed).</li> <li>Implement a degree completion program (The Finish Line).</li> <li>Develop, implement, and analyze the success of a Strategic Enrollment Plan. (Developed and implemented).</li> <li>Increase by 3% the number of students and faculty participating in and supporting undergraduate research (+5% from 2015 to 2016).</li> <li>Increase by 3% the number of faculty utilizing the services of the Teaching and Learning Center.</li> <li>Increase the number of students taking advantage of the Four-Year Graduation Plan.</li> <li>Increase the number of awards (degrees or certificates) annually by 1%.</li> <li>Promote formal participation of Facilities Management in developing and redeveloping instructional and other spaces on campus.</li> </ul>	<p>Achieved Partially</p> <p>Achieved Partially</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved Achieved Achieved Achieved</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Governance-related Budget and Planning Committee.</li> <li>Increase scholarships by 3% annually for all students, with an emphasis on URM and low-income students (Achieved for URM in 2017 only).</li> <li>Plan and implement a balanced budget annually.</li> <li>Increase fundraising total by 2% annually.</li> <li>Increase grant applications, project approval rates, and funding received by 2% annually.</li> </ul>	<p>Achieved Partially</p> <p>Achieved Achieved Partially</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an updated diversity action plan throughout the University.</li> <li>Increase service-learning opportunities for students.</li> </ul>	<p>Achieved Achieved</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase activity and collaboration between the Office of Sponsored Programs &amp; Research and corporations and foundations (both collaborations and funded grants).</li> <li>Continue to promote the success of partnerships with local and regional entities.</li> </ul>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and analyze a comprehensive assessment of student life programming.</li> <li>Increase integration of academics and student life experiences (for SA Co-Curricular, Am Democracy Project and Serene Leadership Institute).</li> <li>Have Cal U's athletic programs compete successfully in the PA State Athletic Conference (Top third in conference for 2015, not 2016 or 2017).</li> <li>Be recognized by active-duty and veteran students as an excellent learning community.</li> <li>Continue to uphold the University Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.</li> <li>Complete campus-wide emergency training annually (2016 not 2017).</li> </ul>	<p>Achieved Achieved</p> <p>Partially</p> <p>Achieved Achieved Partially</p>

In summary, 47% of Goal 1 success measures (to enhance academic excellence and experience of students) were achieved or partially achieved, 50% of Goal 2 success measures (operate using sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices) were achieved or partially achieved, 29% were achieved for Goal 3 (transformative learning and working environment promoting diversity through civility and inclusiveness), 49% were achieved for Goal 4, (serving in areas where we live and learn) and 67% were achieved or partially achieved for Goal 5 (enhance the quality of student life). Overall, 48% of the 50 success measures were achieved or partially achieved and 52% were not achieved.

A similar analysis was conducted for the 2019 Strategic Plan Assessment (I.4.1) with much better results. Table 1.4 provides comparative assessment results between the 2017 and 2019 assessments of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan. From 2017 to 2019, overall assessment measure achievements increased 50%, partially achieved results increased 33%, and success measure failures decreased by 42%.

**Table I.4: Cal U 2015-20 Strategic Plan comparative assessment results**

2015-20 Strategic Plan Comparative Assessment Results													
Goals	Success Measures	2017 Assessment Cycle						2019 Assessment Cycle					
		Achieved	%	Partial	%	Failed	%	Achieved	%	Partial	%	Failed	%
1	19	7	37	2	10	10	53	13	68	0	0	6	32
2	10	3	30	2	20	5	50	5	50	3	30	2	20
3	7	2	29	0	0	5	71	3	43	0	0	4	57
4	5	2	40	0	0	3	60	1	20	2	40	2	40

2015-20 Strategic Plan Comparative Assessment Results														
5	9	4	45	2	22	3	33		5	56	3	33	1	11
<b>Sum</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>52</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>

The 2019 assessment provided data for all 50 (100%) of the strategic success measures linked to the 17 objectives of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan.

- Sixty-eight percent of 19 Goal 1 success measures (to enhance academic excellence and experience of students) were achieved and 32% failed;
- Eighty percent of 10 Goal 2 success measures (operate using sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices) were achieved or partially achieved and 20% failed;
- Forty-three percent of the seven Goal 3 success measures (create a transformative learning and working environment promoting diversity through civility and inclusiveness) were achieved and 57% failed;
- Sixty percent of the five Goal 4 success measures (serving in areas where we live and learn) were achieved or partially achieved and 40% failed;
- Eighty-nine percent of the nine Goal 5 success measures (enhance the quality of student life) were achieved or partially achieved and 11% failed; and
- Overall, 70% of the 50 success measures were achieved or partially achieved and 30% were not achieved.

The assessment results inform the Cal U community that the University is fulfilling its strategic mission, and the data indicates significant progress made from the 2017 to the 2019 assessment of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan. However, additional work is needed to maintain achieved success measures and improve the eight partially achieved and 15 failed success measures. Most of the failed success measures were in Goal 1 and Goal 3. Action plans are needed, perhaps with additional funding requests through USAC and the University Budget and Planning Committee, to improve performance for these strategic goals.

## CONCLUSION

The Cal U mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The stated goals, objectives, and success measures are clearly linked to the mission and specify how the institution is fulfilling its mission. At this snapshot in time, the University is improving its ability to achieve its strategic goals, but also recognizes the need to refocus efforts and support on Goal 1 (achieving academic excellence) and Goal 3 (creating a transformative learning and working environment that promotes diversity through a culture of civility and inclusiveness). These are the two goals that had the greatest number of failed success measures. Despite these weaknesses, 70% of the 50 success measures were achieved or partially achieved during the 2019 assessment cycle.

Also demonstrated is progress with Cal U's four IPs and RAs 7 and 10. Finally, the Standard I chapter provides clear evidence of compliance with the four Middle States Commission Standard I Criteria of Accreditation.

### Strengths

Cal U's stated goals, objectives, and success measures are clearly linked to its mission. Assessment data provides comparative 2017 and 2019 snapshots of how effective the institution has been in fulfilling its mission. The University's strategic mission focuses on student learning, institutional effectiveness, institutional sustainability, and support services for the student experience. Twenty-one success measures support student learning, 12 support institutional effectiveness, 22 support institutional sustainability, and 19 support services to facilitate student success.

Data from the 2019 Strategic Plan assessment indicates progress toward fulfilling the University mission. Overall achievement of the 50 strategic success measures between 2017 and 2019

increased 50%, partially achieved results increased 33%, and failed success measures decreased by 42%. Overall, 70% of the 50 success measures were achieved or partially achieved.

The Strategic Planning Committee comprised a diverse collaborative group consisting of administration, faculty, staff, and students from across the University. This enabled diversity of voices and engagement for meaningful discussions about Cal U's identity and future direction.

Proactive steps have been taken to improve financial sustainability in the current climate of decreasing enrollments.

Strategic Plan assessment data provide examples of 2019 snapshot achievements contributing to institutional sustainability. Additional 2019 strategic assessment snapshot achievements include a:

- 5% student participation increase in the Career and Professional Development Center "Career Advantage" program despite a 13% overall FTE enrollment decline;
- 33% increase in public recognition of faculty and staff achievements in local publications;
- 122% increase in student and faculty participation in undergraduate research through the Cal U Center of Undergraduate Research annual Strike a Spark conference;
- 10% increase in the number of partnerships with local and regional entities through the Cal U Government Agency Coordination Office (GACO);
- 61% increase in alumni participation in University interactions;
- 23% increase in integration of academics and student life experiences; and
- A governance-related Budget and Planning committee created in 2017 as a means of linking strategic, annual, General Education, and periodic program review assessment results to the institutional planning and budgeting process required by RA 10.
- Institutional effectiveness, once considered a weakness for the University, is now growing in strength as demonstrated by incremental improvements each year since hiring a full-time Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, a full-time Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the acquisition of a State System-supported digital assessment data management system (Nuventive). Data for the 2018-19 annual assessment cycle indicated 75% of academic programs submitted final Results Reports (74% rated as on-track) and 73% of administrative support units submitted final Results Reports (73% rated on-track). The newly revised, multi-dimensional General Education assessment process was successfully implemented (see narrative in Standard III, Criterion 5) and a revised State System periodic program review process (see narrative Standard III, Criterion 1) was pilot-tested during the 2018-19 assessment cycle and fully implemented during the 2019-20 assessment cycle with 15 academic programs.

## **Challenges**

- Many higher education institutions are confronting enrollment and financial challenges like Cal U. During the past eight years, Cal U experienced continuous annual enrollment decreases totaling a 26.6% enrollment loss (almost 2,400 FTE students). As a result of this decline, there has been a cumulative negative impact on the financial health of the University.
- The University has also experienced an increase in students presenting with mental health issues as identified by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Provost. During the entire 2018-19 academic year, 251 students were seen, most for depression and anxiety, and 54 of these students were in crisis. This challenge seems to be growing; in the fall semester of 2019 alone, 248 students were seen, most for depression and anxiety, and 65 were in crisis. While there are many quality student support programs in place at Cal U, an increasing number of students are withdrawing due to mental health, personal, and family challenges.
- Another challenge has been the development and implementation of a "culture of assessment". Cal U has made remarkable progress with this Institutional Priority during the past two years.

However, as with all cultural change, Cal U has experienced different degrees of resistance from some areas of the University regarding submittals of requested compliance documents. Also, there have been some unexpected delays acquiring needed support personnel and systems for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the annual assessment process.

- To its credit, Cal U has been able to recruit a cadre of highly qualified faculty (many from its accredited programs), as well as superb leadership from many of its academic and administrative service areas. Moreover, greater cooperation with the submission of compliance reports across the University has been noticed.
- Finally, many of the 50 strategic success measures for the 2015-20 Strategic Plan were not well-defined or measurable, benchmarks for success were extremely conservative (easy to achieve), and the sheer number of success measures made periodic assessments more difficult than needed. Strategic plans should be bold, aggressive, and laser-focused on a limited number of critical success measures that can have the greatest impact on the mission and goals. Timid benchmarks (such as “improve”, 1% or 3%) will not likely result in significant achievements.

### **Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation**

- Extend the 2015-20 Strategic Plan one additional year to institute action plans that could improve the eight partially achieved and 15 failed strategic success measures, complete a third strategic assessment cycle, and inform the development of a 2021-26 Strategic Plan with the assessment results, results of the 2020 Self-Study, and results of the 2020 visiting team report.
- Create a specific strategic goal for the 2021-26 Strategic Plan to improve the “culture of assessment” at Cal U (per Self-Study IP 4) with three outcomes: sustainability of OIE personnel and assessment data, 100% compliance rates for submission of annual Assessment Plan and Results Reports (academic programs and administrative service units), and 100% compliance rates for submission of periodic assessments such as Strategic Plans, State System program reviews, and CAS Student Affairs program reviews.
- If Goal 2 persists with the next strategic plan, consider adding a specific strategic objective and related success measures to develop an effective program evaluation and prioritization process (based on accepted program performance criteria such as the Robert C. Dickeson model) in order to evaluate and rank academic programs from strongest to weakest. These results would inform decisions regarding program reductions to achieve financial sustainability, with a significant portion of cost savings allocated to retrain displaced faculty; develop new, relevant programs; and strengthen the sustainability of remaining programs.
- Incorporate Strategic Plan goals, objectives, and success measures into the existing Nuventive yearly assessment cycle. This would require identifying and designating specific assessment leaders for the Strategic Plan goals and success measures with an expectation for annual Plan and Results reporting on progress and action plans to incrementally improve achievement.
- Merge the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) into one complementary unit to leverage the strengths of both units for providing better data and improved institutional effectiveness throughout the University.
- Develop an institutional funding model with appropriate incentives to sustain and improve resources (personnel, budget, and data) for managing Cal U’s revised annual, General Education, and periodic program assessment processes.
- Decrease the number of success measures to better focus on critical measures that can have the greatest impact on achievement of strategic objectives and goals. Also, consider increasing benchmarks for success measure achievement to facilitate better-focused or more innovative efforts to obtain better results.

## STANDARD II

# Ethics and Integrity

*Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The Standard II: Ethics and Integrity work group was charged with understanding how California University of Pennsylvania (Cal U) demonstrates compliance by operating with integrity and showing ethical attributes in all institutional ventures and activities. The Standard II working group held meetings with various stakeholders to recognize how Cal U is achieving its strategic mission and goals with respect to ethics and integrity. Three strategic goals are also Institutional Priorities (IPs) for this self-study: 1) enhancing academic excellence and the experience of students, 2) operating with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices, and 3) achieving optimal enrollment in challenging times. The fourth priority, creating a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness, addresses a Middle States recommendation from the 2010 Self-Study. The University also demonstrates compliance with applicable federal, state, and Commission policies as illustrated in the 2019 Compliance Report (II.1.0).

Cal U is inspired by its core values of integrity, civility, and responsibility, and it is guided by a Bill of Rights and Responsibilities: “We have the right to safety and security; we have the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of others. We have the right to be treated with respect; we have the responsibility to treat others with respect. We have the right to expect the best; we have the responsibility to give our best. We have the right to be treated fairly; we have the responsibility to treat others fairly.” [Cal U Faculty Handbook, page 5 (II.1.1)].

The University “... fully embraces academic integrity and therefore, does not tolerate cheating, academic impersonation, plagiarism, improper research practices, or dishonesty in publication. Violations of academic integrity will not be ignored and will become part of the student’s permanent academic record at the University,” as explained in the Academic Integrity Policy (II.1.2).

Cal U’s mission, goals, priorities, core values, and rights and responsibilities establish the foundation for meeting the requirements of Standard II. Cal U enhances academic excellence and the student experience by implementing policies that promote and protect freedom of expression and speech, while also promoting programs and experiences that encourage students to respect one another’s differences. Criteria 1 and 2 address academic excellence and the experiences of students.

The format for this chapter will review each of the first eight criteria with supporting documentation. Policies and programs that enhance ethics and integrity are explained within each criterion. The ways in which the policies or programs are implemented and assessed are also discussed throughout the write-up. Criterion 9 is addressed throughout and includes a final discussion near the end of the chapter.

### CRITERION 1

The first criterion includes academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights. These policies are systematically communicated to the University community in multiple ways, including onboarding programs for faculty and staff; the Cal U



Faculty Handbook (II.1.1); the Cal U Student Handbook (II.1.3); orientation programs for students; and online training that faculty and staff must complete to comply with federal and state guidelines. Additionally, training and information sessions are available on an as-needed basis during regular meetings of administrative staff, deans, chairs, and advisors. Standard III, Criterion 2 discusses in detail how faculty are trained in academic freedom.

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) provides faculty and staff with training on ethics and integrity. The required annual online training modules include Training for Preventing Harassment and Sexual Violence, Supervisor Anti-Harassment, IT Security Awareness Training, and Employee Benefits/SEAP/Workers Compensation. The Human Resources Website (II.1.4) contains information ranging from employee benefits to reclassification requests.

The Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) represents faculty members and coaches employed at the Commonwealth's 14 publicly owned universities. Academic and intellectual freedom is one of the areas addressed by Articles 2 and 4a of the Collective Bargaining Agreement [CBA, page 2, 5 (II.1.5)]. According to the CBA, the concept of academic freedom must be accompanied by an equally demanding concept of academic responsibility, which includes service and effective teaching.

Cal U is committed to the principles of free inquiry and free expression as identified in the Policy Statements and Compliance Procedures on Equal Education and Employment Opportunity (EEEE) and Social Equity Handbook (II.1.6). Cal U also participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) biennially. The NSSE report covers a broad array of topics, one of which is particularly relevant to freedom of expression. The "Reflective and Integrative Learning" section addresses a student's willingness and ability to consider another person's point of view, which is a critical element of freedom of expression. Instructors emphasizing reflective and integrative learning motivate students to make connections between their classroom learning and the world around them, to re-examine their own beliefs, and to consider issues and ideas from others' perspectives.

The 2013 to 2019 results for the overall NSSE Engagement Indicator "Reflective and Integrative Learning" and other related items show that first-year Cal U students (31.8%) demonstrated lower rates of engagement compared to peers at other State System institutions (35.4%) and at similar institutions (34.9%). That difference, while a concern, is not statistically significant. In contrast, Cal U seniors reported they were challenged to engage with others who have different viewpoints at a 3% higher frequency than first-year students. Among Cal U seniors, 38% indicated they "frequently" engaged with "different others," in contrast to 38.5% of State System students and 38.3% at similar institutions. These results indicate that Cal U seniors are comparable to their peers at similar institutions regarding how often they are engaged in issues related to freedom of expression and academic freedom (see Standard IV, Criterion 6).

Academic and social clubs on campus also are forums where students can express their thoughts and beliefs. The Lambda Bridges LGBTQA+ program provides thought-provoking and educational programs, activities, resources, and services on LGBTQA+-related issues. This organization also hosts Cal U's annual Lavender Graduation ceremony to honor lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and ally students and acknowledge their achievements and contributions to the University. The Multicultural Affairs Office sponsors monthly "What's the T?" panels, described in Standard IV, to discuss diversity-related issues in an open and relaxed atmosphere. According to survey responses (II.1.7), 98% of respondents want to see additional seminars on similar topics and 96% believe the seminars and topics discussed are relevant in today's society and culture.

The University is respectful of the intellectual property rights of faculty and scholars, and it recognizes areas within the institution where they need to be protected. Cal U adheres to and supports the policies and procedures put in place by the State System to promote and protect intellectual property rights. University and State System policies address intellectual property rights related to technology, including Social Media and Acceptable Use policies (II.1.8). The University also addresses intellectual property rights in terms of data and research through PASSHE Procedure/Standard # 2018-37 and the PASSHE Inventors Guide to Technology Transfer and Commercialization (II.1.9), which is the

process that legally protects new technology invented by University faculty and others through their research efforts and makes that technology available for public use through licensing to third parties. The PASSHE Management of Financial Conflict of Interest Procedure/Standard #2016-22 (II.1.10) gives members of the academic community a framework to provide quality and objectivity in research by establishing standards to ensure that an investigator's conflicting financial interests will not bias the design, conduct or reporting of research.

## CRITERION 2

Cal U is committed to maintaining an open and respectful campus climate. The 2015-20 University Strategic Plan (II.2.1) focuses on a "student centered education that prepares an increasingly diverse community of lifelong learners to contribute responsibly and creatively to the regional, national, and global society." Goal 3 is to "(c)reate a transformative learning and working environment that promotes diversity though a culture of civility and inclusiveness." The commitment is reinforced by General Education Outcome Area 3 (Communication and Community), which integrates elements of AACU VALUE rubrics for Intercultural Knowledge and Competence and Global Learning.

The Fall 2018 student population consisted of 7,312 students (by headcount), with most students (89%) coming from seven counties surrounding Cal U. With the flexibility available through the graduate and undergraduate Global Online (GO) programs, that population also included students from all 50 states and approximately 33 countries. In 2017-18, traditional-age students (24 and younger) comprised 76% of the student population, of which around 25% were first-generation students. Seventeen percent (17%) were classified as members of an underrepresented minority (URM). At 13%, Black or African American students made up the largest minority group on campus and Hispanic/Latino students the second largest group (3%) [see Fact Book 2019, starting on page two (II.2.2)].

The third goal of Cal U's Strategic Plan includes increasing enrollment for targeted demographic student populations and academic profiles. The Office of Admissions has created new strategies to increase diversity at Cal U. First, Cal U became a premier partner with the Pittsburgh Promise, an organization that works with high school students from Pittsburgh Public Schools. Second, Cal U has developed new campus visit programs for first-generation and underrepresented high school students. These programs are specifically aimed at offering underrepresented students the opportunity to explore Cal U's academic programs; meet diverse faculty, staff, and students; and learn more about scholarships and financial aid programs. Third, Cal U has developed a recruitment and retention strategy for foster-care students. Finally, Cal U approved a new Assistant Director of Admissions position to serve the Philadelphia area; this individual will focus primarily on recruiting underrepresented high school students. The expected outcome from all of these efforts is an increase in the number URM students attending Cal U. The University's commitment to diversity is evident in these steps taken by the University and its Enrollment Management division.

Cal U offers a variety of campus resources to build community within the student body. The Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Education, which includes the Lambda Bridges Office for LGBTQA+ matters, the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs, the La Donna Harris Native American Institute, and the Women's Center serve a broad spectrum of students. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) also houses organizations that provide opportunities for students to participate in clubs and programs that celebrate diversity in an inclusive and welcoming environment, including the Black Student Union, African Student Association, Cal U Women United, and Cal U Men United. Cal U offers extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities across 100+ clubs and organizations (see Standard IV). The OSA also facilitates student exchange programs at both Cal U and institutions abroad. Campus clubs and organizations are promoted to students in the campus-wide Daily Announcements, information emailed daily to members of the campus community; the University's website; social media; and informational sessions in students' First-Year Seminars.

### Faculty Diversity

One strategy for recruiting and retaining a more diverse student body is to attract a diverse faculty.

The University continues to promote faculty diversity as a priority in its hiring process, as evidenced in Standard III Tables III.8 and III.9. Recruitment efforts directed toward increasing the number of women and minorities have been successful in improving diversity within faculty ranks. As of Fall 2018, more than half of the full-time faculty (52%) were female, with greater numbers populating the instructor (70%) and assistant professor (56%) ranks, and close gender parity at the associate professor (47%) and full professor (46%) ranks. Additionally, 48% of female faculty at Cal U are tenured.

In recent years, strategies were implemented to enhance ethnic diversity among Cal U faculty. Ethnic diversity of faculty has improved, due in part to improved diversity training from the University's Office of Equal Opportunity (formerly Social Equity) for faculty search committees, more aggressive marketing of faculty search positions in diversity sites and publications, and the Visiting Scholar Fellowship Program associated with Cal U's Frederick Douglass Institute (FDI) (see Table III.9). Since 2003, 18 FDI scholars have visited Cal U for one-year, full-time temporary appointments where they receive professional support from experienced faculty as they prepare for academic careers in higher education. The scholars participate in an annual FDI campus program, including a speaker program and activities such as the Douglass Tournament and roundtable discussions on diversity, inclusivity, and social justice issues. They also teach two or three undergraduate classes related to their academic discipline, which allows them to hone their teaching skills while bringing new perspectives and insights to Cal U's students. Some visiting scholars have been invited to fill tenure-track openings at the conclusion of their fellowships and, as of Fall 2018, four FDI scholars have accepted tenure-track positions at Cal U.

### **Campus Climate**

To gauge the climate on campus, Cal U administers the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey (II.2.3) to assess views on diversity and the state of the campus climate. In 2019, 1,652 students (77%), 299 staff (14%), and 186 faculty (9%) participated in the online survey. By self-report, 316 People of Color (15%) and 1,544 (72%) White community members responded. The data indicated 71.4% of campus participants were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the climate on campus, including 60% of Non-White students. Data show that students of color were less satisfied with diversity and inclusion and believe they have less institutional support. These results are consistent with the four themes identified in the qualitative data: political/religion, staff/administration unaware/uninvolved, gender/racial discrimination, and bullying and sexual assault. In response to these concerns, a standing subcommittee in the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Education was created to develop a campus-wide strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative to maintain a discrimination- and harassment-free community.

### **Civic Engagement**

The University supports the American Democracy Project (ADP), a nonpartisan national initiative focused on imbuing college students with a sense of community and civic engagement. Cal U was among the first universities to pilot the ADP in 2003. In 2018, it sponsored or co-sponsored 20 programs to register students to vote, educate them about salient issues, and mobilize them on Election Day. The Campus Vote Project has designated Cal U a Voter Friendly Campus for the past two election cycles and, in 2017, Cal U received a Best in Class Award from the ALL-In Democracy Challenge for having the most improved student voting rate among participating four-year, medium-size, public institutions. The ADP at Cal U brings speakers and faculty colleagues from neighboring institutions to engage students in thoughtful conversations regarding politics and the electoral process.

## **CRITERION 3**

### **Grievance Policies**

The University proactively seeks to avoid conflicts and offers students Mediation Services and Conflict Resolution (II.3.1) through the Office of Student Conduct. However, when alleged discrimination or other manifestations of unfair practices arise, there exists a well-defined set of policies and

procedures for addressing grievances. The University documents its grievance policies in multiple sources, including the EEO and Social Equity Policy (II.3.2); Title IX Policy (II.3.3); Title IX Web Page and Title IX Compliant Form (II.3.4); Discrimination Complaint Form (II.3.5); Student Rights and Responsibilities (II.3.6); Filing a Complaint (II.3.7); Academic Integrity Policy (II.1.2); Online Student Complaint Process (II.3.8); Reporting Discrimination, Harassment, Violence (II.3.9); Academic Standing Policy (II.3.10); SAP Appeal Form (II.3.11); Appealing the Effective Date of Drops and Withdrawals (II.3.12); Cal U Student Handbook (II.1.3); and 2019-2020 Graduate Catalog (II.3.13).

Article 5 of the APSCUF CBA (II.1.5) outlines the grievance policy for faculty. Requirements and expectations of faculty are addressed in both the Collective Bargaining Agreement (II.1.5) and the Cal U Faculty Handbook (II.1.1). Student complaints and grievances concerning faculty, unrelated to EEO/Title IX, follow the same process as for academic integrity. While informal resolution with the faculty member is encouraged, students may transition complaints for review by the department chair, and, if appealed by either party, the appropriate College Dean. The dean has the authority to investigate more serious complaints in accordance with Article 42 of the CBA (page 119) (II.1.5). In the case of staff grievances, the AFSCME CBA (II.3.14) outlines procedures for staff and Human Resources tracks these grievances.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

The Student Code of Conduct includes the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities (II.3.6) and delineates acceptable behaviors, both on and off campus, for all students. It also explains the University conduct process, which is separate from legal proceedings: “Any member of the University community, guest, visitor, or other interested party may make a report of an alleged violation of University rules against a student.” Reports of code violations are submitted to the Office of Student Conduct, which tracks all code violations per semester.

The Student Conduct Code also outlines the process used to address allegations of violations of these expectations – a process designed to respect the rights of everyone involved (II.3.6). The Office of Student Conduct assists students in making mature, responsible decisions that protect themselves and others, maintain an appropriate educational environment, and demonstrate respect for property. The code is designed to provide guidance and structure for students in their relations with others and in their use of University resources, and to encourage positive decision-making and problem-solving skills. Ultimately, the code encourages students to understand both how their actions affect others and their implications for future career goals.

Cal U’s Gender-based/Sexual Misconduct (Title IX) Policy is discussed in Criterion 8.

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects students with disabilities on campus. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Cal U provides reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities to ensure equal access to its programs and activities. (See appendix for chart detailing accommodations provided.) Standard IV provides a detailed overview of the University’s Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). (See Standard IV, Criterion 1.)

The University Housing Resident Handbook (II.3.15) contains the “Rules, Regulations and Policy” for students living in the residence halls or Vulcan Village apartments. It also warns students of disciplinary actions that may occur if they violate the policy. The University’s Statement on Hazing Policy (II.3.16) applies to students in Fraternity and Sorority Life and prohibits all forms of hazing. Infractions are reported to the Greek Life advisor or the Division of Student Affairs.

### **Academic Integrity**

Cal U embraces academic integrity based on a defined Academic Integrity Policy (II.1.2) and students are expected to embrace academic integrity as well. The University does not tolerate cheating, academic impersonation, plagiarism, improper research practices, or dishonesty in publication. The policy defines academic dishonesty and includes a procedure with multiple levels of due process and appeal rights for the student. The process begins with the class instructor and continues to the

department chair, the College Dean, and an Academic Integrity Committee where the faculty member and student present cases and are questioned by committee members; a final recommendation is presented to the Provost if the student is found to have violated a rule. If a faculty member has clearly indicated penalties for violations of academic integrity in the syllabus, those sanctions will apply for students found guilty. If penalties are not clearly defined, the Provost, in consultation with the Academic Integrity Committee, will determine the sanction. Due to recent concerns over possible violations of academic integrity in online classes, Cal U has developed a new Verification of Student Identity Policy (II.3.17).

#### **CRITERION 4**

State System employees, including Council of Trustees members, must abide by the Pennsylvania Public Official and Public Employee Ethics Act (II.4.1). The Ethics Act prohibits a public official or employee from taking action that would result in a conflict of interest. An anonymous fraud/abuse hotline is available to report ethics and integrity concerns. The Cal U Conflict of Interest Policy (II.4.2) “provides a framework to manage, reduce, or eliminate conflicts of interest in research, education, and service activities.” It covers sponsored activities, including research and instructional activities, and applies to both faculty and staff. In addition, the University requires certain individuals (those seeking or nominated for public office, public officials, certain public employees, and solicitors) to file an annual State Ethics Commission Statement of Financial Interests Form (II.4.3). They also must adhere to the PASSHE Conflict of Interest Policy (II.4.4) and PASSHE Procedure Standard 2016-22 Management of Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) Rules (II.4.5).

The Purchasing Office is required to abide by all Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Procurement Codes [Document 62 pa .CS 101 et seq] (II.4.6), which state that “an attempt by a Commonwealth employee to realize personal gains through public employment by conduct inconsistent with the proper discharge of the duties of the employee is a breach of public trust.” For example, once grant funds (whether they be from federal, private, or corporate sources) are received by the University, they are considered public monies and their handling must comply with PASSHE Expenditures of Public Funds (II.4.7).

The University will respond to requests for information under the Right to Know Act (II.4.8) as amended, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101 et seq, as required by law. All requests must be made in writing and submitted to the designated Open Records Officer.

#### **CRITERION 5**

The Office of Human Resources provides full-time, on-campus support for five collective bargaining units and non-represented staff members. Hiring procedures for faculty are provided in Article 11 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (II.1.5) and in Cal U’s Guide to Faculty Searches (II.5.1). Online resources that document employment onboarding procedures, employment evaluation, and promotion, as well as employment discipline procedures, are readily available for all faculty and staff. All online resources and on-campus trainings are regularly updated and disseminated to employees in an effort to maintain ethical transparency in all respects.

In addition to offering professional development trainings, Cal U utilizes ATLAS (Apply, Train, Learn, and Succeed), a learning management software system, to manage and track compliance trainings. This program helps track employee progress in completing necessary trainings throughout the year.

See Standard III, Criterion 2 for a full discussion on faculty evaluation for promotion.

#### **CRITERION 6**

Cal U is a member of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC). As a NACAC member, Cal U adheres to the Code of Ethics and Professional Practices related to transparency, truthfulness, and student-centric policies.

The University adheres to the principles of honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, and in internal

communications. The Office of Communications and Marketing works closely with campus stakeholders (“sources” or Subject Matter Experts [SME]) to acquire information and to verify accuracy in their work. For example, the Office collaborates with Admissions and other relevant offices (e.g., Financial Aid and Housing) on mailings to prospective students; with individual department chairs/members and/or academic program coordinators on academic program webpages; with deans or their designees, the registrar, department chairs, and the Office of Academic Affairs on Academic Catalog pages; and with event coordinators/award winners on news releases. For most projects, material is provided by the designated expert. A team then creates the project, and the expert reviews/approves the result before it is distributed.

The makeup of the “approval chain” is dependent on the nature of the individual project and the deadlines involved. Complex, high-profile projects typically have more levels of approval than simple projects. As an example, the President reviews/approves the University magazine before it goes to print, but a postcard might be reviewed by a copyeditor and the SME before it is distributed. Internally, team members review one another’s work as projects progress. This assures quality and serves as another “check and balance” for accuracy. The goal is to assure that information aligns between products – that a fact provided in a brochure, for example, is accurate and matches information on the website and in a news release.

## CRITERION 7

Cal U is committed to providing access to a high-quality education at an affordable price for a diverse student body. Access is promoted broadly through multiple initiatives, including early admission, college credits for high school students, and streamlined community college transfer agreements. Because the University serves a high percentage of first-generation students (34-36%, with approximately 19% being underrepresented minority students), issues of affordability and accessibility are especially important for Cal U (see charts in Criterion 2). The University’s efforts in these areas are discussed in detail in the report on Standard IV, “Support of the Student Experience.”

The State System’s Board of Governors sets tuition costs. In addition to regular on-campus options, Cal U offers degrees 100% online through both the Global Online Program (GO) and GO Summer and Winter Sessions (II.7.1). A transparent listing of all University tuition costs, fees, and sources of funding are available to all prospective students on Cal U’s website. The majority of students, both commuters and in-state residents living on campus, benefit from a below-average net price when compared to other colleges and universities delivering similar educational quality nationwide [see Financial Aid Net Cost Value of an Education (II.7.2)]. Moreover, a 2018 nationwide study conducted by LendEDU (II.7.3) ranked Cal U among the schools whose students graduate with the lowest average student loan debt, providing clear evidence of its affordability within the Mid-Atlantic region and across the nation.

Merit awards are based on a scholarship matrix, created in 2015 in consultation with RNL. These awards are independent of needs-based scholarships and are discussed in more detail in Standard IV. Most Cal U students receive some form of financial aid, whether scholarships, grants, federal work-study, or loans. Ninety-two percent (92%) of full-time, first-time, degree- or certificate-seeking students received financial aid, with 64% receiving grants or scholarships. Grants and scholarships are available from multiple sources, including federal, state, and local governments, as well as the institution, with \$3,806,303 awarded during Fall 2016 [IPEDS, 2017-18 (II.7.4)]. Seventy-four percent (74%) of undergraduate students receive need-based aid, as seen on the Cal U Financial Aid Webpage (II.7.5). About 200 graduate assistantships are awarded, to approximately 10% of Cal U graduate students. Federal Title IV aid is also available to Cal U students. Continued receipt of federal Title IV aid is dependent on satisfactory student progress, ensuring responsible distribution of this aid.

Respecting the need for informed decisions (or Right to Know), transparent information on the costs of education, including a web-based Net Price Calculator specific to program choice, is readily available to all students and their families. Web-based financial aid content and face-to-face counseling are available. In addition, counselors provide needed assistance with completing the

FAFSA. Information on all forms of financial aid is provided, including a web-based scholarship search tool.

In partnership with the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE), the University provides access to a Financial Literacy program. Students can register for NEFE's CashCourse free of charge and receive extra credit in their First-Year Seminar for completing the course. In compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, Cal U also provides students and the broader community with access to Financial Aid Consumer Information (II.7.6) to facilitate informed financial decision making.

## **CRITERION 8**

### **Compliance Report**

Cal U complies with all federal, state, and Commission regulations and policies, including all accreditation-relevant federal regulations [2019 Compliance Report (II.1.0)].

### **Institutional-Wide Assessments, Graduation, Retention, Certification, and Licensing Board Pass Rates**

Cal U works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state regulations that enhance the safety and quality of the student, faculty, and staff experience. It organizes the responsibilities for different compliance requirements among appropriate departments. Institution-wide data on graduation, retention, certification, and licensure pass rates are found on the Office of Institutional Research and Student Right to Know (Consumer Information) websites. The institution has documented compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation and is in compliance with the Commission's policies. Assessments detailed through the self-study are conducted annually at Cal U and assure compliance with regional, state, federal, and State System guidelines, and include federal and financial assessments; Department of Education audits; an annual external independent financial audit; and institution-wide assessments of academic, support, and administrative departments.

### **Compliance with Regulations Governing the Conduct of Research**

The Cal U Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for ensuring that the rights and welfare of human research participants are protected. The IRB is a "standing committee, constituted per federal regulations, responsible for ensuring that the rights and welfare of human research participants are protected. All members of the University community who engage in activities that are classified as research involving human participants must submit their research proposals to the IRB for review and approval. Further, any organization conducting research in which members of the Cal U community are research subjects must have its research project approved by the IRB" [see About the IRB (II.8.1)].

IRB integrity is ensured through multiple methods. First, committee membership and policies, including bylaws, submission processes, and procedures, are reviewed regularly. The IRB is governed by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations, and when notifications of policy change occur, the Committee makes applicable modifications to remain in compliance with OHRP. Additionally, all members of the IRB are required to complete Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training and remain current with this training before they are permitted to review applications. Regular discussions are held regarding application issues so the application process is streamlined and fair. Moreover, all campus community members must complete the CITI training prior to submitting an application to the IRB. The University Grants Compliance Officer reviews all grant proposals to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

All student, staff, or faculty research involving animals must have the prior approval of the self-regulating Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), which ensures that all federal regulations regarding the care and use of animals for research, testing, and education are enforced. Faculty and students can find research guidelines and protocols through the Center for Undergraduate Research, as well as the written Policy for Student Funded Research (II.8.2).

## **Compliance with Title IX and Nondiscrimination Statutes**

Cal U's vision and mission speak to its commitment to a diverse population and social justice for all. The University's Gender-Based/Sexual Misconduct (Title IX) Policy (II.3.3) contains detailed procedures for filing Title IX complaints. The policy identifies a broad range of behavior that is not tolerated by the University community. This policy and others are located on the University website and are provided electronically to all faculty, staff, and students. Cal U is committed to fostering a community that promotes prompt reporting of all types of sexual misconduct, and timely and fair resolution of sexual misconduct complaints. The University has a Title IX Coordinator who is responsible for handling all complaints and/or concerns related to Title IX violations. Other initiatives implemented by the University to ensure compliance with Title IX include expansion of a University Title IX committee, creation of a Title IX website, mandatory online Title IX training programs, and presentations to campus offices and student organizations. The Office of Equal Opportunity also works with the campus community to enhance diversity in the workforce.

## **Environmental Health and Safety**

Cal U is committed to providing a healthful and safe campus. The University requires annual training by the Office of Equal Opportunity for faculty and staff who oversee student groups. The University's Threat Response Assessment and Intervention Team (T.R.A.I.T) consists of staff from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, University Police, and the Office of Equal Opportunity. The team regularly discusses issues relating to violence, security, and potential threats directed at the University's students, faculty, or staff. This team provides a structured way to share information regarding potential acts of violence and for facilitating needed interventions. Informational guides, pamphlets and trainings are held on campus for faculty, staff, and students, and information for making referrals is available on the T.R.A.I.T. website.

Cal U also complies with state and federal environmental regulations. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) applies every five years to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for an Air Quality Permit. The permit was last issued on April 29, 2016, and must be renewed prior to April 29, 2021. This program monitors emissions from campus boilers and generators, with all emissions records kept at the boiler house. The University is generally audited/inspected annually by the state DEP.

The University has a Hazard Communication Plan (II.8.4), which requires U.S. employers to disclose toxic and hazardous substances in workplaces. Training is provided for employees in the Department of Chemistry and Physics, as well as employees in other departments. Training is delivered in person and online to employees in the maintenance department. Cal U also has a program for Hazardous Material Handling, Storage, and Disposal Program (II.8.5). This program is designed to comply with DEP, EPA, and OSHA regulations. The EHS office coordinates this program for all divisions. A third-party contractor is used to remove the waste streams from campus.

The Department of Chemistry and Physics has a Laboratory Safety and Chemical Hygiene Plan (II.8.6) to provide guidance for the safe handling of all hazardous chemicals in laboratories; ensure compliance with OSHA, EPA, and other applicable regulations; and demonstrate that the plan meets or exceeds the requirements of OSHA's Laboratory Safety Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1450, Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories. Cal U also submits the State of PA Tier II Emergency Hazardous Chemical Inventory or Tier II Annual Report (II.8.7). It has a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan in accordance with the EPA Oil Pollution Prevention regulation 40 CFR 112 and 112.5. The plan is reviewed internally each year and updated as needed. It is reviewed every five years and updated by a third party.

## **Athletics**

Cal U's athletic teams maintain compliance to compete at the NCAA Division II level. The University submits an annual Equity in Athletics Disclosure Report (II.8.8). The Department of Athletics has its own policies and procedures, which are contained in the Student Athlete Handbook (II.8.9). Each year, the University files the Graduation Rates Institution Report that provides information on all



students, as well as student athletes. The NCAA requires universities to report every six years for anyone that came to the University during the 2012-13 academic year (see Standard IV, Criterion 4).

### **Compliance with Commission Policies Additional Compliance Expectations**

As discussed in the Compliance Report (II.1.0), Cal U complies with MSCHE policies. Additionally, Cal U meets Requirements of Affiliation 1 – 6 and 14. Cal U has submitted six Substantive Change requests in the last three years. In July 2018 Cal U submitted substantive changes for a different credential level (post-secondary certificate programs < 30 credits) and establishment of an additional location, at Washington Hospital, for the Radiologic Technology program. Changes also were submitted for the closure of four locations: Allegany College of Maryland, Somerset Campus; Community College of Allegheny County, South Campus; Greater Johnstown Area Vocational Technical Center; and the Southpointe Industrial Park.

### **CRITERION 9**

Assessment of ethics and integrity is built into the structure of Cal U. In addition to the annual reporting of *Assessment Plans* and *Assessment Results Reports* for all academic and non-academic units, Cal U uses the HEDS Climate Survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and regularly reviews other institutional data to address any issues. Administrators and department chairs review and update College documents and program information to assure accuracy.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness collaborate with the administration to create a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness. These offices ensure that Cal U departments, programs, and the University have accurate data, are effectively assessing their operations for continuous improvement, are conducting research in an appropriate manner, and are following federal, state, and local regulations.

### **CONCLUSION**

California University of Pennsylvania is driven and inspired by its core values of integrity, civility, and responsibility. The institution is truthful to its mission and values, and it complies with a multitude of policies and contracts. As a result, the University is compliant in all nine criteria, while also ensuring academic excellence, operating with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices, striving for optimal enrollment, and creating a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness. While meeting all the criteria, as discussed and highlighted throughout Standard II, there are noteworthy strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

#### **Strengths:**

- Policies and procedures are in place to guide the University as it works to achieve its mission, honor commitments, and adhere to union contracts.
- The University secures academic freedom and freedom of speech by educating faculty, students, and staff through trainings, publications, and policies.
- The University makes every effort to recruit a diverse student, faculty, and staff population. It works to create a campus that is open and welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds. Student Affairs provides current issue-oriented diversity programs.
- Cal U is committed to providing access to high-quality education and has been able to do this at an affordable cost. Cal U is able to provide quality education at a cost that does not require students to incur significant debt.
- Cal U fulfills requirements pertaining to environmental safety hazards, Title IX, and federal research funding.

#### **Challenges:**

- Because of the number and variety of campus, local, state, and federal regulations that apply, it can be difficult to effectively communicate all policies and procedures to campus constituents.

- Lean budgets constrain opportunities for professional development related to improving diversity and issues related to campus climate.
- Campus climate and other surveys indicate a mistrust among various campus constituents.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Evaluate the guidance and policies that govern the management of conflicts of interest, enhance accountability for noncompliance, and establish what should be in place to identify and manage risks.
- Improve the transparency of University management decisions for public accountability.
- Strengthen internal communications across campus and more effectively disseminate information about rights, policies, and procedures. Consolidate pertinent information on the University's website and improve accessibility to pertinent information.
- Ensure full use of the results of the HEDS Diversity and Equity Climate by establishing a standing committee responsible for administering the survey, analyzing the data, developing interventions to address any issues emerging in the results, and assessing the effectiveness of these interventions. The Climate Survey provides the means for the University to assess its campus climate and take steps to ensure that issues impacting Cal U are confronted and ameliorated.

## STANDARD III

# Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

*An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.*

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the Self-Study Report documents the ways in which California University of Pennsylvania (Cal U) provides students with learning experiences characterized by rigor and effectiveness at all levels regardless of instructional modality. The chapter is organized by criteria, with the exclusion of Criterion 7, which is not applicable to Standard III at Cal U. Criterion 8 will highlight the robust, periodic, and sustainable College of Education and Human Services assessment process for Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation. Requirements of Affiliation (RAs) 8, 9, 10, and 15, and two Institutional Priorities (IPs) (1 – enhance the academic excellence and experience of students, and 4 – continuous improvement by a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness) will be integrated into the remaining criteria per the Self-Study Design Document. The format for evidence inventory exhibits is: Standard (Roman).Criterion (Arabic).sequence # within Criterion (Arabic). Example: (III.1.1). Additionally, exhibit (III.1.0) is an exhibit of tables and figures within this chapter.

### CRITERION 1

#### Programs of Study

Cal U offers 253 programs of study (majors, concentrations, and certificates), at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including more than 95 graduate programs (master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and graduate-level certifications). These programs exist across 23 academic departments within the four academic Colleges/Schools: Education and Human Services, Liberal Arts, Eberly Science and Technology, and the School of Graduate Studies and Research. In accordance with RA 8 and 9 and IP 4, Cal U strives to seek specialized program accreditations for all programs that can be accredited. As of Summer 2019, 53% of the 109 majors in the Active Degree Majors Inventory (III.1.1) were accredited by external specialized program accreditation agencies.

#### Cal U Global Online

Cal U's Global Online Program (GO) offers an extensive variety of online programs, including many certificate and licensure programs. GO instructors receive training and support through a Teaching Online Certification Course (III.1.2) provided by the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). This certification class is required per the University's Teaching Online Policy (III.1.3) for all Cal U faculty prior to teaching online courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels and also supports RAs 9 and 15.

Cal U utilizes Desire2Learn (D2L) as its LMS and applies a single sign-on authentication process to

access the D2L - LMS. Students are required to log in to online systems with their secure Cal U ID code and password. All email communications are sent to their secure Cal U student email accounts. Additionally, the University adopted and implemented Information Technology Acceptable Use (III.1.4), Academic Integrity (III.1.5), and Verification of Student Identify (III.1.6) policies which apply to all students in all programs of study and modalities.

Students enrolled in online and blended classes are required to complete online orientation and strategy videos designed to familiarize students with the D2L environment and aid in navigating the online course materials and activities for success in the online environment. Faculty developing online and blended classes complete online D2L Self-Paced Training Modules (III.1.7) to establish and manage their D2L course shells.

The assessment of online undergraduate and graduate degree programs follows the same annual and State System periodic program review processes as face-to-face programs.

## **Program Requirements**

All bachelor's degree programs at Cal U require the completion of 120 credits, which includes coursework satisfying General Education requirements as well as the requirements for at least one major course of study. Master's programs require the completion of no fewer than 30 credits, and doctoral degrees require the number of credit hours typical for their respective disciplines, as set forth in PASSHE Policy 1990-06-A (III.1.8).

The Cal U Doctor of Criminal Justice Studies (D.C.J.) is the first regionally approved clinical doctorate in Criminal Justice Studies, requiring 42 credits; the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Education Administration and Leadership requires 57 credits; and the Doctor of Health Science (D.H.Sc.) in Health Science and Exercise Leadership requires 48 credits. A fourth doctoral program, Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), requiring 116 credits, was recently approved by the State System Board of Governors (BOG); however, the DPT is not expected to accept its initial student class until the Fall 2023 semester after the development of appropriate physical facilities, faculty complement, and a positive accreditation action from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).

## **Curriculum**

Faculty carry primary responsibility for the initiation, revision, and quality of the curriculum. A rigorous initial approval process, in combination with the systematic review by faculty, ensures that the General Education and major requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. Curriculum proposals for new programs and courses, as well as revisions of existing programs and courses, are approved by majority vote from governance constituents outlined in the Curriculum Approval Process (III.1.9). The approval process begins with faculty serving on department-level curriculum committees and proceeds for review and approval by department faculty. Following department approval, undergraduate curriculum changes are reviewed and considered for approval by undergraduate College councils. Graduate curriculum proposals are reviewed and considered by the Graduate School council. Three years of College and department minutes are available for review upon request.

Approved council proposals are forwarded to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) whose Bylaws (III.1.10) and Policies and Procedures (III.1.11) ensure that all proposed course syllabi and program structures include common elements from standardized Course Master Syllabus Proposals (III.1.12) and Graduate and Undergraduate Program Advisement Templates (III.1.13). Three years of UCC minutes are available upon request.

General Education Program (GEP) proposals are forwarded by UCC to the General Education Committee (GEC) to determine if alignment occurs between proposed courses and learning outcomes within specific General Education "menu" categories designed to enhance student learning across all undergraduate programs at Cal U per GEC Bylaws (III.1.14). Three years of GEC minutes are available upon request. If approved, these proposals are returned to UCC.

Once approved by the UCC, curriculum proposals are reviewed and considered for final approval by the University Provost. New academic programs are additionally reviewed and considered for approval by the President and University Council of Trustees (COT). Three years of COT minutes are available upon request. Once new programs are approved by COT, they are forwarded for final approval by the State System Chancellor.

### **Academic Program Assessment**

Academic program assessment occurs on both an annual and a periodic (program review) basis. The University's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Website (III.1.15) provides assessment policies, procedures, resources, timelines, and a university-wide assessment model for strategic, academic, student affairs, and administrative areas in support of the student experience.

The major components of the Cal U Academic Assessment Model (III.1.16) includes a full-time Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), a senior-level faculty assessment liaison with specialized knowledge and expertise in academic assessment, program-level faculty assessment leaders for 253 academic programs (majors, concentrations, and certificates), and an Academic Program Assessment Committee (APAC) for evaluating and providing feedback for *Assessment Plan Reports (Plan Reports)* and *Assessment Results Reports (Results Reports)*.

The addition of a full-time Director of IE enables assessment to be centralized with administrative management, thus adding to its systemization and organization. The director also serves as the communication conduit for the assessment process to campus and non-campus stakeholders (RA 8). Avenues of communication include university-wide email Announcements, workshops, the revised Cal U IE website, and academic and administrative assessment monitoring tools and executive assessment status reports.

All academic degree programs and administrative support units are required to establish student learning outcomes (SLOs) or unit-level outcomes identifying essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of program graduates and support services. The assessment of learning outcomes is vital to the development of a rigorous and coherent course of study and overall student success per RA 8 and IPs 1 and 4.

Academic programs and administrative support units are required to participate annually in a two-step process with a comprehensive *Assessment Plan Report (III.1.17)* submitted to OIE during the beginning of the Fall semester and a final *Assessment Results Report (III.1.18)* near the end of the Spring semester. SLOs drive the development of annual assessment plans for each academic program and administration service area, with at least two outcomes assessed annually. The *Plan Report* requires a clear department or program mission statement, measurable student learning outcomes with two measures for success, benchmarks of success for each measure, aligned with both the institution mission and one or more goals of the current Strategic Plan, per RA 9. Working with the OIE director, program assessment leaders and members of APAC provide leadership within their Colleges/School for the development and implementation of assessment plans.

The *Results Report* requires program assessment leaders to close the assessment "loop." Assessment data are analyzed and discussed at department meetings, where data-driven action plans are developed to address identified program areas of improvement based on assessment plan criteria being met or not met. This approach allows input from everyone within the department, as well as feedback and consultation to improve educational effectiveness within the academic program. The *Results Report* also asks assessment leaders to identify areas of financial need to improve assessment outcomes as the initial input for RA 10; the process for linking academic assessment results to institutional planning and budgeting are described in the "Budget Process Enhancement" section of Standard VI.

Once *Plan* and *Results Reports* are submitted, Academic (III.1.19) and Administrative Support Services (III.1.20) Monitoring Tools (AMTs) are used to track assessment progress of all academic and administrative programs and services. Progress is categorized in one of three "stop light" levels of readiness as displayed in Table III.1.

**Table III.1: Assessment levels of readiness (*Plan and Results Reports*)**

Status	Description
Green	On track with clear mitigation plans for any issues
Yellow	On track with known issues and defining mitigation plans
Red	Off track with no known mitigation

Administrators responsible for commending progress or encouraging more timely actions from program- and unit-level assessment leaders are provided periodic progress updates from Executive Assessment Status Plan (III.1.21) and Results (III.1.22) Reports that also assist with the facilitation of the assessment process throughout their respective areas. At the conclusion of each academic year, the Deans and Provost also review Annual Department Reports (III.1.23) submitted by department chairs, which include summaries of annual assessment results. Department budgets and new full-time faculty requests are directly linked to these reports and the quality of their assessment processes.

As of December 2019, 75% of academic programs submitted *Results Reports* for the 2019-20 assessment cycle, with 74% of reports rated with a green status on the Academic AMT – Results. Additionally, an Academic Inventory of Assessment of Outcomes (III.1.24) provides a comprehensive snapshot of *Assessment Plans* and *Results Reports*. Seventy-three percent of administrative/academic support units submitted *Results Reports* for the 2019-20 assessment cycle, with all reports rated with a green status on the Administrative/Academic Support Services AMT – Results. A similar Administrative Inventory of Assessment of Outcomes (III.1.25) of administrative units and services in support of the student experience provides a comprehensive snapshot of *Assessment Plans* and *Results Reports*.

During the 2018-19 annual assessment cycle, the Director of IE and a graduate assistant manually copied and pasted content (outcomes, assessment methods, assessment results, descriptions of program improvements) from over 253 academic and 70 administrative *Assessment Plan Reports* and *Results Reports* to the above academic and administrative inventories. The process was extremely cumbersome and time-consuming; hence, it was replaced with Nuventive, a digital assessment platform, and an Assistant to the Director of IE during the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

### **Periodic State System (PASSHE) Academic Program Reviews**

The State System identifies Cal U's Active Degree Majors required for periodic program reviews. As of the 2018-19 academic year, 109 active majors were included in the State System's Active Degree Major Inventory (III.1.1) for periodic program reviews. In July 2018, the State System BOG approved a revision of the 1986-04-A: Academic Program Review Policy (III.1.26) and approved related Procedure 2018-35: Review of Academic Programs and Programs in Support of the Student Experience (III.1.27).

The revised policy and procedure better aligned the program review process with the revised MSCHE Standards. This revision aligned program reviews and specialized program accreditation cycles, modified reviews for accredited programs, provided local latitude for selecting performance metrics aligned for achievement of the University mission and goals, and included annual assessment trend data in the decision-making process. The realignment led to revised review cycles for accredited and non-accredited programs, revised Program Review Procedures and Timeline (III.1.28) and Full (III.1.29) and Modified (III.1.30) Program Review Templates for non-accredited and accredited programs.

One notable development in the revised process was the organization of the assessment criteria based on the Robert C. Dickeson Model for Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services (III.1.31). This was done to facilitate more useful decision-making data for constituents. The Dickeson model also recommends reinvestment of cost savings from decision options through the institutional planning and budgeting process (RA 10) to develop new, high-demand programs and improve the sustainability of current programs. A pilot study of the revised process with four accredited programs and a modified review template was conducted during the 2018-19 assessment cycle. The full implementation of the revised process occurred with 15 programs during the 2019-20 program review

cycle.

## CRITERION 2

### Faculty Hiring Process

Cal U functions under a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA; [III.2.1](#)) between the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) and the State System. APSCUF is certified to represent department chairs, full- and part-time teaching faculty, librarians, and faculty whose responsibilities lie outside of the classroom. The CBA addresses many faculty personnel areas, including appointment (Article 11), performance review and evaluation (Article 12), tenure (Article 15), and promotion (Article 16), which are directly related to faculty qualifications and performance.

Cal U hires well-qualified professionals via a standardized search process managed by an academic affairs search coordinator with specific roles from department search committees, a faculty search committee chair, department chairs, deans, vice presidents, and the University President, outlined in the Guide to Faculty Searches ([III.2.2](#)). Faculty search committees are given appropriate support and training with a Search Procedures, Operations, and Tasks (SPOT) Briefing ([III.2.3](#)) at the beginning of each search cycle.

Faculty qualifications and job descriptions are developed by the search committee chair in consultation with the search committee and department chair. The job description is reviewed, revised, and approved with feedback from the academic affairs search coordinator, academic dean, and the University's EEEO/Title IX Coordinator who closely monitor each stage of the hiring process with a Faculty Search Timeline ([III.2.4](#)) and Job Postings (available upon request).

### Academic Credentials

As of the Fall 2018 semester, the majority of full-time tenure-track and tenured Cal U faculty (93.33%) had earned doctorates in their disciplines of expertise or approved terminal degree equivalencies identified in PASSHE Procedure/Standard 2017-30 ([III.2.5](#)), such as a Master of Fine Arts and Master of Library Science as indicated in Table III.2 [see ([III.1.0 Table III.2](#))]. Terminal degrees are required for most tenure-track faculty postings.

Exceptions may occur for applicants from high-demand disciplines with an earned master's degree and extensive applied work experience or professional licensure germane to the teaching field per PASSHE Policy 1987-01 ([III.2.6](#)). Although tenure is obtainable for hires without terminal degrees, non-terminal degreed faculty are generally ineligible for promotion to the full-professor level.

### Faculty Sufficiency

Cal U has sufficient faculty to fulfill the University's mission as demonstrated in Table III.3 [see ([III.1.0 Table III.3](#))] which provides FTE counts of all tenured, tenure-track, temporary faculty, and students. During the Fall 2018 semester, the overall University student-faculty ratio averaged 17.3 students per faculty member. Similar Faculty and Student FTE Count Tables ([III.2.7](#)) are also available in the evidence inventory for the three undergraduate Colleges, 23 academic departments, University Library, two Student Affairs service areas, and the Athletics/Athletic Operations area.

### Faculty Diversity

Please refer to Standard II, Criterion 2 for this narrative.

### Faculty Professional Development Center

Faculty are provided with opportunities for professional development through the Faculty Professional Development Center (FPDC), the TLC, the Office of Academic Success, and other units. The mission of the FPDC is to promote and support teaching, research, service, appropriate use of technology, and grant writing, as well as the University's core values. An FPDC Committee and five sub-committees implement the FPDC programs through activities as indicated on the FPDC Website ([III.2.8](#)). All program activities follow established policies and procedures described in the FPDC

## Bylaws (III.2.9).

Faculty are encouraged and offered financial support to present at conferences related to professional development activities. From FYs 2016-17 to 2018-19, 86 Cal U faculty (29 per year average) received \$94,060 in Travel Awards (III.2.10) in support of presentations delivered at academic conferences. Professional development and academic scholarship activities are considered in tenure and promotion decisions by the University-Wide Promotion Committee (UWPC) and University-Wide Tenure Committee (UWTC). The UWPC, UWTC, and FPDC provide annual faculty workshops to explain the promotion and tenure processes and orient new faculty to the University. Workshop attendance at these events during the past six years is provided in (III.1.0.Table III.4). PowerPoint presentations of the most recent FPDC Promotion (III.2.11) and Tenure (III.2.12) Workshops are provided as examples of goals, expectations, and processes for promotion and tenure.

Prior to the start of each Fall semester, new faculty members participate in a one-day New Faculty Orientation (III.2.13) to both welcome and help ease the transition to the University. Various units on campus present information on faculty professional development; library resources; the role of the faculty union; an overview of Cal U's evaluation, tenure, and promotion processes; available teaching technologies; and faculty role in student advising. At the New Faculty Orientation for the Fall 2019 semester, a post-orientation assessment highlighted three areas of concern due to inadequate coverage: the utilization of union resources on campus, technological resources available to assist faculty with teaching, and faculty roles as advisors to students. The FPDC director indicated more time and coverage will be given to better address these areas in the future.

FPDC also sponsors Merit Award Recognition Programs (III.2.14) each year to recognize full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty who are currently engaged in exceptional commitment to grant writing, research, teaching, use of technology, and service/service-learning. Merit Award Guidelines (III.2.15) are also available for review.

## Teaching and Learning Center

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) is a resource for Cal U faculty and staff to learn and explore effective uses for mobile and instructional technologies affecting student learning and success. The TLC team provides hands-on training and facilitates an exchange of ideas to help faculty and staff explore best practices for integrating technology into their courses as indicated on the TLC Website (III.2.16).

The TLC offers face-to-face (F2F) training, online video workshops, and a Resource Loaner Program (RLP) for technology applications. Not only are these resources being utilized, but there is also an overall increase in the use of service areas (24% for F2F training, 67% in online video presentations, 170% in phone-assisted requests, and 163% and the RLP) over the past three years (III.1.0.Table III.5).

In Spring 2019, a survey was conducted examining faculty satisfaction with TLC's training sessions and other services. Results depict a 25% (n=108) response rate, with 75% participation among full-time and 26% part-time faculty. TLC Annual Survey Results (III.2.17) identified frequency of use for respondents' participation in training and support services offered by the TLC. Table III.6 summarizes survey results for statements assessing the transfer of TLC trainings to the classroom and overall satisfaction with TLC services and resources.

**Table III.6: Survey results: transferability and satisfaction (response scale: 1 to 5 (highest))**

Transferability Satisfaction Responses	Responses	Average (1-5)
Utilized the resource/technology in my teaching after attending or viewing the TLC Workshop offering(s) and/or Sessions(s).	70	4.3
Rate your overall experience with the TLC Workshop offering(s) and/or Training Session(s).	70	4.6
Overall experience with the TLC's Resource Loaner Program (RLP).	33	4.9
Overall experience with the TLC.	95	4.7



## **Faculty Performance Reviews**

Faculty performance review and evaluation is performed within the guidelines of Article 12 in the CBA (III.2.1). The process of faculty evaluation is perceived broadly as a means of faculty mentorship and continuous, longitudinal professional development in three overarching areas: effective teaching and fulfillment of professional duties, continuing scholarly growth, and service contributions to the University and/or community. Faculty performance reviews are conducted annually for full- and part-time temporary faculty by a departmental evaluation committee and department chairperson.

Annual performance evaluations for tenure-track faculty are conducted by the appropriate department evaluation committee, the department chairperson, and the department's respective undergraduate academic dean during the five-year probationary period preceding the tenure decision. The department chairperson and dean are expected to provide faculty with a reasonable opportunity to discuss their written performance evaluations.

Performance evaluators for probationary (tenure-track) faculty during the first through fourth years of service are required to provide a recommendation of renewal or non-renewal. Evaluators are encouraged to provide recommendations for continuous improvement for each performance area as well as longitudinal performance feedback during every evaluation cycle as part of the mentoring process. Evaluations for tenured faculty occur on a five-year cycle. The same performance evaluation process used for tenure-track faculty is applied for tenured faculty. Interim evaluations may be conducted for tenured faculty if judged necessary by the appropriate academic department chair or dean. Examples evaluations are available upon request.

### **CRITERION 3**

#### **Publications and Communication of Requirements**

Please refer to Standard II, Criterion 6 for this narrative.

#### **New Student Orientation**

Please refer to Standard IV, Criterion 1 for this narrative.

#### **First-Year Experience Classes**

Please refer to Standard IV, Criterion 1 for this narrative.

#### **Academic Advising**

Cal U engages students in formal advising activities at the beginning of their Cal U experience and carries advising through to program completion. Advising at Cal U is multi-layered and tailored to provide a structure that enables students to persist to graduation.

Students are assigned a program-level academic faculty advisor and are expected to seek academic advising at least once a semester. According to the Cal U Academic Advising Policy (III.3.1), faculty advisors are available in their assigned office at least five hours for a minimum of three days per week. Students are urged to take advantage of all advisory and consultation services available at the University as identified in New Student Orientation and First-Year Experience courses, and many departments place a hold on student registration accounts until their advisees meet with their advisors prior to registration for the following term.

Tools used to aid academic advising are available to all advisors, including Academic Program Advising Maps (III.3.2), the Starfish Student Success Tracking (III.3.3) application, and the DegreeWorks program audit/academic advisement tool. The DegreeWorks system allows students and advisors to track students' progress toward meeting degree requirements. Students can obtain DegreeWorks audits from Cal U's Vulcan Information Portal through any computer or device connected to the Internet, including open-use computers on campus.

In Spring 2019, "progress surveys" were pilot tested using Starfish. Progress surveys allow faculty to

identify students who are not attending class, are doing poorly on assignments, or have poor test grades. When student athletes are flagged, notifications are automatically sent to the athletic director and coaches. Starfish progress survey responses are aggregated, summarized, shared each year with faculty and administration, and informs the annual assessment process for the Success Center as displayed in Table III.7.

**Table III.7 2018-19 Starfish progress survey summary**

2018-19 Starfish Progress Survey Summary	
Progress Surveys Completed	700
Academic Performance Flags	1,126
Inconsistent Attendance Flags	628
Success Center Referrals	318
Student Athletic Grade Tracker	388

A comparison of the Cal U first-year retention and second to fourth year persistence rates for the 2012 to 2015 cohorts is displayed in (III.1.0 Table III.8), and four- and six-year completion rates from the 2010 to 2013 cohorts in (III.1.0 Table III.9).

Data indicate overall decreasing retention, persistence, and completion trends since 2012. The decrease in student success rates most likely reflects a change in admissions requirements. Prior to 2013, new students unable to meet the minimum high school GPA and SAT/ACT admissions thresholds were conditionally admitted to associate degree programs which are not counted in the Federal IPEDS Cohort. This procedure changed beginning with the 2013 cohort with the implementation of the Support for Success (S4S) program (described in Standard IV, Criterion 1), which provides additional academic support for conditionally admitted first-time, full-time students to baccalaureate degree programs.

The quality of senior and freshman advising interactions is illustrated in the 2013 to 2019 NSSE mean score trend data for Seniors (Table III.10) and First-Year Students (Table III.11). Trend data from 2013 to 2019 senior-level cohorts indicate a consistent level of Cal U Quality of Advisor Interactions, slightly higher than the State System average, and comparable to Carnegie institutions. In contrast, trend data for first-year student Quality of Interactions with Advisors is slightly lower than senior-level quality measures, but also show recent improvement on par with Cal U senior-level students. This is comparable in quality with peer State System schools and slightly lower quality than Carnegie institutions.

**Table III.10: NSSE Quality of Interactions with Advisors mean scores - Seniors**

	2013	2015	2017	2019	Average
Cal U	5.3	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.33
State System Schools	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.23
Carnegie Institutions	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.33

**Table III.11: NSSE Quality of Interactions with Advisors mean scores - First-Year Students**

	2013	2015	2017	2019	Average
Cal U	4.9	5.0	4.8	5.4	5.0
State System Schools	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.0
Carnegie Institutions	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.2

A variety of new and ongoing initiatives are specifically designed to address the negative retention and persistence trends and four- and six-year graduation rates. Among these efforts are current improvements in the S4S program and strategies to improve campus diversity and climate per the 2019 HEDS Diversity and Climate Survey results (Standard II, Criterion 2), improved tutoring (see Standard IV, Criterion 1), and additional professional development opportunities in best practice academic advising methods for faculty and staff described below.

## **Academic Advising Committee**

In September 2017, an Academic Advising Committee (AAC) was created based on discussions with the State System Student Success Network (SSN), a collaboration between the 14 State System universities and the Office of the Chancellor. The SSN provides opportunities for institutions to share insights and collaborate to improve student retention, progress, and completion, with a special focus on minority and low socio-economic populations. The purpose of establishing the AAC was to bring faculty together to discuss best academic advising practices to improve student success indices.

In Fall 2017, the AAC conducted a comprehensive Faculty Advisor Survey (III.3.4) to determine the current state of student advising by faculty. The survey was sent to 250 full-time faculty with a 56% (141) response rate. Results depicted a general dissatisfaction in advising resources and support systems with written responses overwhelmingly indicating a desire for increased professional development opportunities for advisors in prescriptive and developmental advising. In January 2019, an Effective Advising in Higher Education (III.3.5) workshop was conducted by Dr. Fai R. Howard (University of South Florida) for four Cal U academic deans, 41 faculty, and 34 academic support staff. Following the workshop, participants completed an evaluation instrument indicating a need for future training in advising tools and software, appreciative and intrusive advising, assessment of advising practices, and the development of an advising syllabus aligned with best practices. By the end of the 2019 Spring semester, 75 faculty and staff received Starfish training, an additional 12 participated in a day-long Starfish summit, and 64 faculty and staff participated DegreeWorks workshops.

The AAC continued addressing ongoing concerns during a follow-up Advising Retreat (III.3.6) in July 2019, where 12 committee members reviewed and revised a preliminary Cal U faculty Advising Syllabus (III.3.7) and Quick Reference Guide (III.3.8). Advising Retreat Assessment Results (III.3.9) indicated agreement with key principles about appreciative advising: appreciative advising would help faculty become better advisors, their feedback on the advising syllabus and quick reference guide improved the quality of those advising resources, and with additional training, nine of 12 AAC members would be willing to work in two-person teams to present appreciative advising to academic departments.

The Faculty Advising Syllabus was approved by APSCUF and the Provost at the October 2019 Meet and Discuss session. In addition, an "Appreciative Advising Training Program" which will be implemented at academic department meetings during Spring 2020. The Faculty Advising Syllabus and Faculty Quick Reference Guide will be distributed and discussed during the AAC department training sessions and, beginning Fall 2020, all new faculty will receive academic advising training and resource materials during annual FPDC New Faculty Orientations. The primary goal is to enhance academic advising to improve student retention and completion rates.

## **Teacher Education Student Support System**

The College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) conducts mandatory information advising sessions for students in all teacher education programs. The sessions occur each semester to ensure all teacher education students receive and understand current certification requirements for teachers in the Commonwealth. The training, conducted by COEHS leadership, facilitates an understanding of policies, procedures, and requirements for program completion and the postgraduate process for obtaining teacher certification in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Many of the training information sessions occur face-to-face (for student teachers), scheduled in the beginning of each semester and electronically through the Cal U LMS.

A Candidate Policy Handbook (III.3.10) and Teacher Candidate Resources Guide (III.3.11) provide relevant information regarding teacher candidate resources, academic support, and supplemental student success services to assist with teacher education student success. Refer to Criterion 8 for additional information about the COEHS support and Quality Assurance Systems.

## **Graduate School**

Advising and other resources available for graduate students parallel those provided to undergraduate students, located at the Resources for Current Students Website (III.3.12) of the Cal U homepage. Specific graduate and other University Policies (III.3.13) and an online Graduate Catalog (III.3.14.) are also available for graduate students. Admissions counselors are available to assist graduate students, and graduate academic advisors are assigned to all students who are admitted into their chosen graduate programs. Academic advisors with students in online programs use a variety of web-conferencing services to communicate and advise their students.

### **CRITERION 4**

#### **Louis L. Manderino Library**

The Louis L. Manderino Library is a 142,868 square foot, four-story building offering over 450,000 titles, from 231 packages, derived from 57 vendors per Cal U's EBSCO-Admin Holdings Report (III.4.1). The Library strives to be the intellectual center for the University while promoting a campus vision of academic excellence, innovation, and service. The library serves 5,125 patrons during a typical week.

Library administration occurs by leadership of an Associate Provost and Dean of Library Services and Undergraduate Research. The management of collections, services, resources, and facilities of the libraries is achieved through four library departments: Public Services, Technical Services, University Archives and Special Collections, and Library Information Systems and Media Services per the Library Organizational Chart (III.4.2). The library holds membership in organizations such as the State System of Higher Education Libraries Council (SSHELCO), Keystone Library Network (KLN), Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortia Inc. (PALCi), and LYRASIS (formerly PALINET).

Patron access to University collections, services, and resources occurs through the Manderino Library Website (III.4.3). A collection of scholarly journals, magazines, books, e-books, newspapers, and audiovisual resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week are available with authorized access with institutional identification. Help for distance learners is also available through the "Ask a Librarian" application using online chat, text, or email. The library also works closely with the Office of Students with Disabilities Services to ensure that specially designated computer workstations in open areas are accessible with software that aids in accessing and using library resources.

Research services and information literacy are provided to teach students the full range of information literacy skills, including effective search strategies, evaluation of information, development of research questions and research plans, and accessing information in a variety of formats. In addition to traditional walk-in reference assistance, students are encouraged to schedule consultation appointments with the subject-specialist librarian appropriate to their needs. Library Research Appointment Survey Results (III.4.4) demonstrated that students who scheduled a research appointment indicated that working with a librarian helped them find sufficient resources for their research, that they feel better prepared for research in the future, and that they are likely to schedule another research appointment and recommend the service to others.

In order to integrate the use of primary resources into the curriculum, faculty librarians have been collaborating with teaching faculty. Course-integrated information literacy instruction is offered to both face-to-face and online classes. This includes guest lecture sessions or library instruction embedded within a class throughout the entire semester and one-on-one research consultations. Library faculty each have their own liaison areas (subject specialties) and work with classes in specific programs. Workshops and other instructional opportunities are provided as needed. One example is a three-week workshop that occurs with Upward Bound Bridge students every summer to help them transition into college. Cal U library staff are also closely connected with the University's First-Year Experience program and provide informal sessions upon request.

#### **Manderino Library Assessment of Library Service Quality**

Beginning in 2006, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and Texas A&M University Libraries'

LibQUAL® survey of library services has been administered to the Cal U community on a three-year schedule to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of library service quality. The survey is delivered online and consists of 22 core, five local, and three general satisfaction questions measuring user perceptions of service. The results and data analysis of these surveys are available at the Library LibQUAL Home Page (III.4.5).

A complete table of Library LibQUAL Improvement Strategies (III.4.6) from the last two reviews is provided in the evidence inventory. Library faculty and staff are also considering a supplement or complete replacement for the LibQUAL assessment process with an alternative Home-Grown Assessment Process (III.4.7) specifically aligned with the Cal U Strategic Plan and less confusing for participant responses (rating minimum, desired, and perceived expectations of library services).

### **Learning Communities**

Please refer to Standard IV, Criterion 1 for this narrative.

### **The Success Center and Underprepared Students**

Please refer to Standard IV, Criterion 1 for this narrative.

### **Academic Tutoring and Support Services**

Please refer to Standard IV, Criterion 1 for this narrative

### **Office for Students with Disabilities**

Please refer to Standard IV, Criterion 1 for this narrative.

### **Center for Undergraduate Research**

The primary mission of Cal U's Center for Undergraduate Research (CUR) is to support the development of a sustainable program of research, scholarship, and creative activity (RSCA) across disciplines at the University. CUR seeks to fulfill this mission through administration of the Student Research Fund, Student Travel Fund, and annual Strike a Spark Conference as indicated on the CUR Website (III.4.8).

The CUR Student Research Fund program calls for students to submit proposals for semester-long projects reviewed by members of the Undergraduate Research Advisory Council (URAC). Since 2014, 61 proposals have been submitted and 47 (77%) funded, totaling \$71,551. The Center has a clearly defined process for Funded Research Projects and Proposal Submissions (III.4.9).

Through the Student Travel Fund program, students apply to receive up to \$600 each in travel support to attend conferences where they are accepted to present. Beginning Fall 2017, travel awards were also provided for faculty mentors to accompany their students at conference presentations. Twenty-nine applications totaling \$38,464 have been awarded since the inception of the program. A record of Travel Awards and Procedures (III.4.10) are provided in the evidence inventory.

An annual Strike a Spark Conference, held at the University Convocation Center, provides a venue for Cal U students to present their research. Sample program brochures from Strike a Spark Conferences (III.4.11) are provided in the evidence inventory. Students who choose to be evaluated are typically assessed by a team of three judges using Strike a Spark Evaluation Rubrics (III.4.12) for creative works, oral presentations, and poster presentations. A list of Strike a Spark Awards (III.4.13) are provided in the evidence inventory.

### **Career and Professional Development Center**

The Career and Professional Development Center (CPDC) guides students and alumni through the process of exploring majors and careers, pursuing experiences, and building connections for career and professional success as described at the CPDC Website (III.4.14) using the Career Advantage Roadmap (III.4.15). Every student utilizing the CPDC has a Career Coach (III.4.16) who helps the student explore majors and career sets; find a job shadow, internship, co-op, or full-time job; develop an effective resume; prepare for an interview, job fair, or networking event; connect with employers

and alumni; and/or find and apply to graduate school.

The CPDC houses the Internship Center, a resource for students seeking for-credit internship or non-credit co-op experiences. Internship Center staff help students navigate the internship search and registration process, processing more than 500 internship applications per year. A “Rutledge Internship Award” was established to assist students from southwestern Pennsylvania with funding for internships outside of the region to make the experience affordable. A committee comprised of faculty, administrators, and staff evaluate the applications and decide the amounts of funding. Thirty-three students, over the past four years, have been awarded \$169,418.

Two special internship opportunities are available to Cal U students. The CPDC collaborates with The Washington Center (TWC), where students spend the semester in the District of Columbia with Cal U tuition waivers and scholarships from TWC to help defray costs. The Harrisburg Internship Semester (T.H.I.S) also collaborates with the Office of the Provost to provide up to 15 internship credits for Cal U students of any major as well as a stipend to assist with living expenses, to sharpen skills in report and speech writing, research, and program design and evaluation with Pennsylvania policymakers and leaders.

The CPDC also provides an online career platform called Handshake (III.4.17) to advertise on-campus student employment, internships, co-ops, and job opportunities; track internship applications; facilitate conversations between students, alumni, and potential employers; and to house online resources such as the Career Resource Handbook, the “FOCUS” career guidance and information system, internship FAQs and processes, and other tip sheets. Students can also track their participation in Career Advantage activities in Handshake, upload resumes and other documents, and complete a profile that can be made public for viewing by hiring employers. In 2018-19, there were 17,714 Handshake logins by more than 50% of Cal U students, 29,679 internships and jobs posted by 4,300 employers, and 1,438 resumes reviewed by CPDC staff members.

The CPDC offers ten internship/career fairs and events each year. Employers may also schedule on-campus interviews, information tables, and information sessions. A summary of student and employer CPDC Engagement (III.4.18) between 2014 to 2019 indicates a total of 3,559 student engagement activities occurred during this five-year period, averaging 712 per year. The CPDC and Internship Center’s performance is also included in the CPDC 2013-18 PASSHE Program Review Report (III.4.19) and the CPDC 2017-18 Annual Report (III.4.20).

The CPDC conducts a “First Destination Survey” three times per year to collect data regarding career outcomes of graduates up to six months after graduation. Table III.12 displays First Destination Survey career outcomes for the Class of 2018. Responding to declining survey rates from 2013 to 2017 (45% to 25%), the CPDC automated survey distribution and data collection through Handshake and solicited help from faculty and staff to encourage their graduates to engage in the survey. Improvement efforts resulted in an increased response rate of 52% for the 2018 graduating class.

**Table III.12: 2018 First Destination Survey career outcomes**

Percent	2018 Career Outcomes
98%	Working or continuing their education within six months of graduation.
75%	Working full time.
5%	Working part time.
16%	Continuing their education.
89%	Working in a job very related to their career interests.

The CPDC regularly assesses student learning and the effectiveness of programs and services offered to assist students in becoming “career ready.” For example, student learning was measured by post-appointment surveys administered to students meeting with CPDC staff members about resume writing and internship/job search strategies. Oral surveys were scored using rubrics after these appointments. In 2018-19 CPDC Post Appointment Surveys (III.4.21), 91% of students agreed they had increased knowledge for creating an effective resume, 80% agreed they had increased

knowledge of finding and applying for an internship or job, and 73% scored an “accomplished” or “advanced” on the oral post-appointment internship/job search survey. CPDC Student Resume and Mock Interview Rubrics (III.4.22) are also used for class assignments where faculty require their students to submit resumes and complete mock interviews.

The CPDC also surveys employers attending events and makes data-based changes to improve effectiveness. For example, a significant number of employers attending the Fall 2017 Career Fair indicated the event did not meet their expectations with respect to the number of students attending and student attire. Based on this data, enhanced marketing efforts resulted in an increase from 292 to 445 students (66%) in attendance at the Fall 2018 Career Fair. The implementation of a “Dress for Success” program was also created to assist students in obtaining free professional dress for career events and interviews.

### **Office of International Programming and Study Away**

The mission of the Office of International Programming and Study Away (OIPSA) is to facilitate the growth of the international perspective of students, faculty, and staff on the campus of Cal U as indicated on the OIPSA Website (III.4.23). This mission is achieved by promoting cross-cultural mobility, support for international students, and the integration of international perspectives within the campus community.

The OIPSA has been involved in providing support services for faculty-led study abroad experiences. During the past four years, Faculty-Led Study-Abroad Experiences (III.4.24) were conducted by five academic departments for ten spring/summer study-abroad experiences in 11 foreign countries for 103 Cal U students. Over the past three years, International Study-Away Experiences (III.4.25) were completed by 24 Cal U students earning 212 credit hours of instruction in 16 higher education institutions located in 14 foreign countries. OIPSA also actively recruits International Students (III.4.26) to Cal U. During the past five years, the University averaged 61 enrolled students from 28 foreign countries pursuing degrees in 24 academic programs of study.

The 2018-19 International Student Survey (ISS) (III.4.27) was administered to Cal U international students. Fifty-one students were invited by email to participate in the survey over the course of the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters, garnering a 52% response rate. Based on ISS results, the OIPSA director initiated weekly meetings with the University’s Director of Undergraduate and International Admissions to improve international recruitment and admissions processes. There is now greater focus on ways to streamline the application process and determine where the University can be more successful in recruiting international students. Current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with 15 international institutions in ten countries in those regions have been initiated, and efforts to recruit students from these institutions are now in progress. OIPSA also maintains working associations with regional and state university professional colleagues to gain and share knowledge on international immigration, student services, and academic and retention topics.

The OIPSA Director also revised the online orientation program to enable an easier and more informative transition to the University. New students are now able to access an online orientation prior to arriving to Cal U. Leadership opportunities are provided for international students through the International Club. Collaborative social activities are planned for the international students with other social clubs, community services, and fundraising activities, including an International Dinner averaging about 160 guests each spring.

### **University Honors Program**

The University Honors Program (UHP) at Cal U provides academic, professional, and social opportunities for students with high academic potential to join a supportive community of students challenging themselves to make the most of their University requirements. Invitation is based on UHP Admission Requirements (III.4.28). Incoming freshmen and Honors Program students in good standing are eligible for several honors-specific scholarships, grants, and awards. They take innovative courses with qualified Cal U faculty. UHP is managed by a Faculty Director and an Associate Faculty Director with oversight by an Honors Advisory Board (HAB) and a member of the

Student Honors Advisory Board (SHAB). The curriculum, course rotation, course descriptions, and benefits are described on the UHP Website (III.4.29).

An average of 62 freshmen have been accepted in the UHP program each year with a mean total enrollment of 228 students. Data trends indicate program growth with a 38% increase in freshmen and a 44% overall UHP enrollment increase during this period. Honors student students are actively involved in an average of 143 honors course addendums, 29 theses, 69 travel excursions, and 79 local and national student undergraduate research conferences per year displayed in UHP Program Experience (III.4.30) tables. UHP faculty and students are actively involved in professional publications and presentations, scholarships, grants and awards, and post-graduation placements. Summaries of these academic activities and achievements during the past four years are provided in Annual UHP Reports (III.4.31).

An online UHP satisfaction survey was conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness during the final two weeks of the Spring 2019 semester. Spring 2019 UHP Survey Results are available in the evidence inventory (III.4.32).

## CRITERION 5

### General Education Program

Undergraduate program coherence at Cal U occurs from a carefully designed General Education Program of broadly defined essential skills and knowledge students need to better understand and master their degree programs while also living healthy, ethical, fulfilling, and productive lives in the modern world. PASSHE Board of Governors Policy 1993-01-A (III.5.1) sets the mission and standards for General Education at all State System institutions.

The Cal U General Education Program (GEP) (III.5.2) consists of a minimum of 40 undergraduate credits with specific learning goals and approved courses in each of 14 General Education menu categories. The GEP is assessed annually (described below) and through periodic GEP Reviews, most recently in 2010 (III.5.3) and 2015 (III.5.4). The next program review will occur during the 2020-21 academic year.

### General Education Goals and Outcomes

The current Cal U GEP was implemented in 2013 and is integrated at all developmental levels of the undergraduate academic experience, from foundational courses in math and writing to senior-level Special Experience courses. It ensures breadth of knowledge and intellectual inquiry with program-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) consistent with the mission of the Cal U 2015-21 Strategic Plan, and more specifically, IP 1: “[to] enhance the academic excellence and experience of our students.”

The course-level General Education Menus enable students to select courses that are aligned with specific menu goals, which are essential to a Cal U baccalaureate level of achievement. They include diverse worldviews, intellectual strategies, processes of acquiring knowledge, and the basic academic skillsets required of all baccalaureate disciplines. For a sample of three of the 14 lists of Course-Level Menu Goals, see (III.1.0 Table III.13).

All menu goals for GEP courses support three overarching, program-level General Education SLO Areas. Graduating students achieve career-ready competencies by examining and solving problems through (I) Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis, executing original solutions through (II) Critical and Creative Thinking, and producing effective communication materials while using audience-appropriate norms and a community-appropriate focus (III Communication and Community).

These three program-level Outcome Areas encompass transferable skills for citizenship and employment, as documented in major employer surveys such as the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook 2019 Survey (III.5.5), which rates “critical thinking/problem solving” as the most in-demand employment competency, followed by teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethic, and oral/written communications (page 33). These SLOs also directly



support the University's strategic mission of "providing high-quality, student-centered education that prepares an increasingly diverse community of lifelong learners to contribute responsibly and creatively to the regional, national, and global society."

Each of these three program-level SLO Areas (I, II, and III) are supported by the individual General Education course-level menu goals, as demonstrated in (III.1.0 Table III.14). The full list of General Education menus and their course-level goals appears in the General Education 2013 Program (III.5.2) document.

### **Assessing Student Attainment of General Education Program-Level SLOs**

All General Education assessment measures are organized under the three program-level Outcome Areas of (I) Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis, (II) Critical and Creative Thinking, and (III) Communication and Community, as detailed in the (III.1.0 Table III.14) General Education Outcomes and Assessment Measures Map.

In the 2013 Periodic Review Report, the University detailed a complex five-year model for assessing General Education that involved independently evaluating each of the 76 course-level menu goals from 2013-18. This model relied on course instructors to submit reports for each menu goal. Although these efforts were marginally successful, they did not result in widespread faculty participation, nor lead to any noteworthy curricular changes or enhancements to pedagogy. Further information on 2013-18 assessment appears in the Standard V Self-Study narrative and in the introduction of the 2018-19 General Education Assessment Report (III.5.6).

Since the completion of the 2013-18 General Education assessment, the University developed multiple approaches and models for evaluating General Education competencies as displayed in the General Education Outcomes and Instruments Map (III.5.7). These varied assessment practices allow for triangulation of data and involve the use of both direct and indirect measures, including standardized tests, course-embedded assessments using rubrics adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE Rubrics-based instruments, and survey instruments.

The Cal U General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) is responsible for assessing the program-level SLOs and assisting with designing and carrying out assessment strategies based on approved methods. The first two years of assessment under the GEAC have provided ample data and insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the University's current processes. In response to these findings, GEAC made changes to these processes and has further changes planned for the coming year. Assessment processes conducted by GEAC are detailed in the 2018 General Education Assessment Plan (III.5.8). For the current five-year plan for assessing General Education program-level SLO Areas, see (III.1.0 Table III.15).

### **Results of General Education Assessment**

The 2018-19 General Education Assessment Report (III.5.6) details four distinct assessment processes implemented in 2018-19, analyzes the results, and identifies opportunities for improvement. This section summarizes the findings of the four assessment processes.

### **Internal Direct Assessment of General Education Outcomes Using AAC&U VALUE Rubrics**

The 2018-19 cycle focused on Outcome Area II, Critical and Creative Thinking. For the internal direct assessment, student artifacts were requested from 87 instructors of Special Experience and Upper Division Writing Intensive General Education courses. Artifacts were evaluated by an interdisciplinary team of trained faculty representing each of the Colleges. Full results of the 2018-19 internal direct assessment are available in the 2018-19 General Education Assessment Report (III.5.6) beginning on page two of the report. Overall results demonstrate students scoring higher on rubric items C "explanation of issues" and F "ethical and legal use of sources", and lower on rubric items A "innovative thinking", B "synthesis/transformation", D "evidence," and E "evaluation of sources" as indicated in Table III.16.

**Table III.16: Results by criteria for Critical and Creative Thinking and College**

Rubric Item	Students Scoring at Level 2, 3	University	COEHS	LA	S&T
A	Innovative thinking	39.46%	27.66%	47.54%	40.26%
B	Synthesis/transformation	38.50%	34.69%	40.32%	40.26%
C	Explanation of issues	61.08%	60.00%	57.38%	64.86%
D	Evidence	35.45%	30.00%	48.39%	28.57%
E	Evaluation of sources	38.38%	38.78%	49.18%	29.33%
F	Ethical and legal use of sources	47.46%	48.94%	54.84%	39.71%
G	Conclusions, products, and outcomes	40.10%	32.00%	44.44%	41.77%

Note: Frequencies reported on students scoring (Benchmark levels 2 and 3).

The scores suggest that in the artifacts evaluated, students were incorporating ideas from sources and citing sources, but were not rigorously questioning the viewpoints of experts or differentiating their own ideas from those of their sources. The 2018-19 Assessment Report identifies opportunities for improving students' higher-order information literacy. These opportunities, currently being discussed for implementation by the General Education Committee, include more detailed examination and scaffolding of information literacy components in General Education courses, and representation from library faculty on the GEC.

While this initial direct assessment effort was successful, limitations to the study included selection bias based on volunteers contributing to the artifact pool, with only 30 of 162 course sections providing useable artifacts, and the restricted nature of the assignment type (traditional research papers only). An additional source of possible error was possible misalignment of the assignment(s) and AAC&U rubrics.

Strategies to minimize these issues, improve the assessment process, and enhance students' critical and creative thinking skills were identified by the GEAC. These strategies include development of key or signature assignments by program faculty, improving communication between the GEC and General Education instructors, and creating a more detailed General Education curriculum map. The full list of opportunities for improvement appears at the end of the 2018-19 General Education Assessment Report (III.5.6) beginning on page 22 of the report. Because this was the first iteration of the internal direct assessment, outcome targets were not set prior to conducting the assessment. As the revised assessment model matures, the GEAC plans to set specific outcome targets.

### **Internal Direct Assessment of General Education Outcomes Within Academic Program SLOs**

When compiling the Academic Assessment Inventory for the 2018-19 annual assessment cycle, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) identified all undergraduate program-level SLOs corresponding to General Education program-level Outcome Areas I, II, and III. The OIE found that 105 of the academic program SLOs assessed in 2018-19 aligned with General Education Outcome Area I, Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis; 84 aligned with Area II, Critical and Creative Thinking; and 82 aligned with Area III, Communication and Community. The OIE calculated the percentage of corresponding academic program SLOs within acceptable levels of performance for each General Education Outcome Area (e.g., programs that met or exceeded a department's criteria as evidenced in the assessment inventory). The OIE also linked the same 271 total academic program SLOs to the six Essential Skills areas identified by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Table III.17 provides percentages of these program SLOs that met or exceeded at least one measure.

**Table III.17: Embedded Assessment Results with Cal U General Education Outcome Areas and MSCHE Essential Skills**

General Education Competency	Total Number of Academic Student Learning Outcomes Assessed	Percent of SLOs that Met or Exceeded at Least One Program Criteria
<b>Cal U General Education Outcome Area</b>		
1. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis	105	40%

General Education Competency	Total Number of Academic Student Learning Outcomes Assessed	Percent of SLOs that Met or Exceeded at Least One Program Criteria
2. Critical and Creative Thinking	84	61%
3. Communication and Community	82	56%
<b>MSCHE Essential Skills</b>		
1. Oral and Written Communication	74	54%
2. Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning	53	47%
3. Critical Analysis and Reasoning	61	54%
4. Technological Competency	9	78%
5. Information Literacy	46	46%
6. Study of Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives	28	46%

These results were further discussed (beginning on page 17) of the General Education Assessment Report (III.5.6), as well as seven examples of continuous improvement strategies from academic programs with SLOs linked to General Education Outcome Areas. These programs are especially noteworthy because the SLOs are often transdisciplinary and therefore strongly connected with the students' General Education experiences. The programs selected for inclusion were Business and Economics, Psychology, Nursing, Childhood Education (concentration in PreK-4), Environmental Studies, Chemistry, and Communication Disorders. Detailed descriptions of these programs' strategies for General Education-related program SLOs appear beginning on page 19 of the Assessment Report.

The successes and challenges of meeting General Education Outcome Areas within these academic programs provide useful indicators of how General Education Outcome Areas are being supported and evaluated in undergraduate programs across campus. Further, the examples listed in the General Education Assessment Report offer strategies that might be applied more broadly. For example, the Assessment Report suggests that the Business program model for assessing information literacy might be incorporated in other majors, as might the Chemistry program's SLO for discipline-specific oral and written communication.

#### **External Indirect Assessment of General Education SLOs Corresponding to Items on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

Cal U has administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to first-year students and seniors every two years for the past eight years. Appendix 1 of the 2018-19 General Education Assessment Plan (III.5.8) links individual NSSE items to each of the three General Education program-level Outcome Areas (I. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis, II. Critical and Creative Thinking, and III. Communication and Community). Also, Table 3 on pages 15 and 16 of the General Education Assessment Report (III.5.6) lists NSSE Academic Challenge results for Cal U 2013-19 freshmen- and senior-level scores mapped to Cal U General Education program-level Outcome Areas compared with State System averages.

NSSE items linked to General Education Outcome Areas I, II, and III for graduating seniors were consistently on par with those of their peers at other State System institutions. However, responses from first-year students were consistently lower than those of their State System peers, often by as many as ten percentage points. This seems to suggest that while the first-year students may struggle with these items more than do their State System peers, faculty are helping them overcome those struggles and reach the same level as their peers by the time they graduate. If so, then this portion of the NSSE data represents a success story for Cal U's General Education and academic programs.

It was also noted that a slight dip occurred in the most recent NSSE scores aligned with higher-order information literacy skills. This is consistent with the results of the internal direct assessment using AAC&U VALUE rubrics for Critical and Creative Thinking and is addressed in the "Opportunities"

section (beginning page 22) of the 2018-19 Assessment Report. The University plans to provide ongoing monitoring of NSSE results to help assess the impact of improvement strategies detailed in the Assessment Report as well as the benefits of several academic- and support-level projects designed to improve student success.

### **External Direct and Indirect Assessment of General Education SLOs via National Association of Colleges and Employers SkillSurvey**

In Summer 2019, the Cal U Career and Internship Center piloted the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) SkillSurvey, which solicits evaluation of students' job performance from both employers and the students themselves. Several items on the SkillSurvey correspond to General Education Outcome Areas, as detailed in Sections II and III (page 3) of the General Education Assessment Plan (III.5.8).

One hundred and nineteen Cal U students and 213 employers participated in the pilot SkillSurvey. Compared to other students nationally, Cal U students scored highest in Teamwork/Collaboration (corresponding to General Education Outcome Area III, Communication and Community) at 66.4% "proficient" or higher, and lowest in Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (corresponding to General Education Outcome Areas I, Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis; and II, Critical and Creative Thinking) at 41.2% "proficient" or higher, slightly above the national average of 40%. NACE ranks Critical Thinking/Problem Solving as the most in-demand of the eight job skills it surveys. Future iterations of the SkillSurvey will have more detailed results, enabling more specific analysis of items corresponding to General Education Outcome Areas.

### **General Education Future Directions and Program Review**

At present, the GEAC is implementing the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis assessment cycle. The GEAC gathered student artifacts from Fall 2019 and has begun to rate them using the AAC&U VALUE rubrics selected for this cycle. A second set of artifacts will be gathered in Spring 2020 and rated. External ETS HEIghten exams are also in the process of being administered for comparison with the internal assessment, and the results will be included in the 2019-20 General Education Assessment Report.

As previously indicated, the Cal U GEP at Cal U underwent full program reviews in 2010 and 2015 and is scheduled for its next program review in 2020-21. The 2020-21 review will be able to take advantage of data gathered from the first two cycles under the new assessment model (Critical and Creative Thinking in 2018-19 and Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis in 2019-20), and a third (Communication and Community) in progress in 2020-21.

## **CRITERION 6**

The School of Graduate Studies and Research offers master's programs, doctoral programs, and graduate (post-baccalaureate and post-master's) certificates. The University is the largest graduate school in the State System and has grown steadily since its founding in 1962. Graduate school enrollment increased 12% from Fall 2014 (1,736 unduplicated headcount) to Fall 2019 (1,937).

In Fall 2010, Global Online (GO) comprised 58% of the total graduate-level enrollment. GO graduate-level enrollment increased (from 68% to 71%) of total graduate enrollment from Fall 2014 (F2F=550, GO=1186) to Fall 2019 (F2F=565, GO=1372). The Office of Graduate Studies maintains a complete list of enrollment trends for Active Graduate Programs (III.6.1), also listed on pages 3-4 of the 2019 Fact Book (III.6.2). The most popular graduate programs at Cal U are summarized in (III.1.0 Table III.18).

The School of Graduate Studies and Research is administered by a graduate dean and assigned staff, with close guidance from the Graduate Council. The graduate curriculum, like that of Cal U undergraduates, is closely monitored. The Graduate Council is charged with adopting and revising Graduate School policy, evaluating and approving new programs and curricular changes, and sharing innovative partnerships and enrollment growth action plans. All new or revised graduate-level proposals or programs are approved by the process outlined in Standard III, Criterion 1 of this report.

Graduate Council minutes are available upon request.

Graduate School Annual Reports 2015-17 (III.6.3) reflect the University's commitment to shared governance and communicate broad-based input from stakeholders in program-level decision-making. Detailed graduate degree requirements for all graduate programs are available in the 2019-20 Graduate Catalog (III.6.4). Cal U graduate education is designed and facilitated by highly qualified faculty to perform the duties of their positions. Graduate faculty advise and mentor their students. The rigorous qualifications criteria required for faculty recruitment and employment at Cal U and equally rigorous processes of annual and periodic faculty performance, tenure, and promotion reviews, were described in Criterion 2 of this chapter.

When determining faculty qualifications for graduate teaching, Cal U gives primary consideration to the highest degree earned. The institution also considers competence and effectiveness in teaching, and where appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees; professional licensure; certification and accreditation requirements; honors and awards; research expertise; and discipline-specific work experience or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective graduate-level teaching and student learning outcomes. The Graduate School experiential and professional mission is supported by faculty with extensive professional experience, in addition to academic credentials. Graduate School Faculty Status Policies (III.6.5) provide specific criteria for granting graduate faculty status for departments offering graduate programs. Policies and procedures for faculty credentialing for teaching are guided by State System policies and procedures discussed in Standard III, Criterion 2. All instructors are required to have recent curriculum vitae and syllabi on file in the President's Office.

In 2014, a Graduate School SWOT Analysis (III.6.6) involving key stakeholders within the Graduate School and GO offerings informed 2015-21 Cal U Strategic Plan Goal 1 (Objective 4.1) to "increase the number of awards (degrees or certificates) annually by 1%" and Goal 2: "develop a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan that includes recruitment, retention, and new program development at both the graduate and undergraduate levels." These strategic initiatives led to the development of a Cal U 2017 Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) (III.6.7), which focused on an ongoing commitment to improvement of enrollment. The SEP goal of increasing graduate enrollments 3% annually was exceeded in 2017 with a 12.5% increase, and mean Fall semester growth rates from 2017-19 were 2.5% and 3.7% respectively for graduate GO and F2F programs, per the Graduate Students 2014-19 Fall Enrollment Report (III.6.8).

Implementation of SEP objectives also culminated in new graduate programs, including the four previously mentioned (Criterion 1) clinical doctoral programs, Master of Arts in Arabic Language and Linguistics - M.A., and a Master of Accountancy - M.Acc. The increased opportunities for graduate education resulted in 1,130 students completing their doctorate, master's degrees, graduate certificates, or graduate certifications in 2018-19, a 4% increase from the 1,082 earned in 2014-15.

Cal U offers 11 internal accelerated degree programs. In all of Cal U's accelerated degree programs, graduate coursework is shared between the graduate degree and the bachelor's degree. No undergraduate courses are used to fulfill the requirements of the graduate degree as indicated in PASSHE Procedure-Standard 2016-25-A (III.6.9) Guidelines for Accelerated Bachelor to Master's Degree Programs. Applicants to these programs must demonstrate academic achievements substantially above the requirements to remain in good academic standing and have junior status.

The institution's graduate degree programs, concentrations, and stand-alone certificate programs participate in the university-wide annual assessment and periodic program review processes described in Standard III, Criterion 1 to ensure that regardless of modality of delivery, they consistently align with the institutional mission, embody a coherent course of study, and are based on fields of study appropriate to higher education. All graduate programs identify SLOs, develop a plan to measure them, assess their achievement, and use the results of the assessment process to make improvements. The *Assessment Plan Reports* and *Results Reports* are available through the OIE Academic Inventory of Assessment of Outcomes (III.1.24).

The University closely monitors student success at the graduate- and undergraduate-levels. First-year persistence rates (Table III.19) and four-year graduation rates (Table III.20) are used to measure student success in graduate-level degree-seeking programs (i.e., excluding non-degree certification or certificate programs).

**Table III.19: Graduate student success rates for master's degrees**

	First-Year Persistence Rate 2015-16 Cohorts	First-Year Persistence Rate 2016-17 Cohorts	First-Year Persistence Rate 2017-18 Cohorts
F2F Graduate	76%	85%	87%
GO Graduate	71%	75%	76%
<b>All Graduate</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>79%</b>

**Table III.20: Graduate student graduation rates**

	Four-Year Graduation Rate 2012-13 Cohort	Four-Year Graduation Rate 2013-14 Cohort	Four-Year Graduation Rate 2014-15 Cohort	Four-Year Graduation Rate 2015-16 Cohort
F2F Graduate	80%	73%	74%	77%
GO Graduate	81%	73%	74%	70%
<b>All Graduate</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>72%</b>

At the time of graduation, all graduate students are asked to complete a First Destination Survey from the CPDC which includes questions about their career plans. In 2018, nearly 50% percent of graduate students completed the survey. Collected data from the survey include hired employers, enrollments in graduate and professional schools, starting salaries, and geographic locations, as well as relevance of employment to their career of choice. More than 97% of graduate students who responded to the survey indicated they were working or continuing their education within six months after graduation.

#### **CRITERION 7**

(Does not apply at Cal U)

#### **CRITERION 8**

The periodic assessment of effectiveness of the academic programs and services in support of the student experience has been integrated throughout the previous six criteria. This section highlights a mature, sustainable, continuously improving Quality Assurance System (QAS) for the undergraduate and graduate accredited teacher education programs at Cal U.

Cal U has a rich history of preparing teachers and educational specialists since its creation in 1852 as the "California Academy." Informal course- and program-level assessment occurred early on as would be expected of a college dominated by teacher educators. A formal college-wide assessment process began when the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) process was first initiated at Cal U. Under the guidance of a College-wide Oversight Committee (OC), the COEHS continuously met NCATE approval and was reaccredited through Spring 2021. Since 2014, faculty members have been transitioning to the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards and expectations in an on-going self-study and implementation of continuous improvement initiatives.

Use of the LiveText portfolio management tool emerged over time beginning with the 2008 (NCATE) review. LiveText serves as a management tool for all data collected in the QAS, including key assessments and ratings provided by clinical partners.

While the teacher preparation programs had a functioning assessment system in place for quite some time, assessment was not a driving force for all activities related to the design and delivery of the student learning experience. Creating a truly data-driven system, with high-quality assessments informing decisions, was clearly needed.

## Oversight Committee

The College Dean created a COEHS OC in Fall 2014 to develop and institutionalize a culture of assessment and continuous improvement for all teacher education programs as documented in Oversight Committee Agendas (III.8.1). The OC became a structure of shared governance with CAEP standards as a guide for incremental continuous improvement. The OC immediately began to develop policy and make decisions regarding initial and advanced certification programs, working with the three undergraduate Colleges, the School of Graduate Studies, and numerous GO programs.

The primary goal during the initial year of the OC was to evaluate the current assessment system, reviewing the CAEP standards and developing a timeline for implementation. It was determined that an improved culture of assessment required two related, but distinct, paradigm shifts. The first shift was relatively easy. COEHS teacher education faculty were accustomed to using student learning data to improve instruction within their courses; however, collectively, data were not being used to inform program-level improvements. The second shift proved more challenging and required professional development and faculty ownership. Faculty could no longer assume success because candidates received certain experiences such as course work or field-based activities. Measurements on actual candidate products and performances needed to provide data to monitor learning and plan program improvements.

The OC attended the CAEP Conference in October 2015 and attended workshops on Quality Assessments. This continuing education resulted in the creation of new Key Assessments, a renewed reliance on LiveText for collecting and recording data, and a focus on improvement of advanced programs in the same manner as initial certification programs.

## Continuous Improvement

The path to excellence and compliance with CAEP expectations required the OC to focus on developing a QAS for ensuring continuous improvement. The foundation of the plan is a functioning data collection process based on clear program outcomes aligned to CAEP, development or identification of assessment measures, the sharing of all data with key stakeholders, and analysis of the data to inform continuous improvement. Therefore, the QAS became an integral component of preparing COEHS teacher education candidates in for their future. The incremental development of this revised continuous improvement process is chronologically described in the Documentation of Continuous Improvement Summary Table (III.8.2).

## Quality Assurance System

The QAS was created to ensure that teacher candidates possess the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to become successful professionals. The OC developed program outcomes and together with practitioners in the field and ad hoc committees, identified six measures based on those outcomes. An Overview of the QAS (III.8.3) identifies a wide array of performances assessed in the classroom, with multiple criteria and performance indicators for each.

During 2016-20 COEHS TEAM Days and PDS Collaborative Meetings (III.8.4), faculty and practitioners co-constructed performance indicators for each of these assessment instruments. Respected members of the teaching profession who plan and implement classroom experiences and maintain a safe and productive learning environment were selected for this process. Each of these assessments were aligned with CAEP Standard 1, which is also aligned with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards categories. All assessments are scheduled to be administered three times across a candidate's program.

The first administration was designed to introduce the assessment measures to the candidates. Although candidates are introduced to the assessment process as a whole, they only receive feedback on selected criteria chosen by each academic program. These data are used for continuous improvement of candidate performance within individual programs (program assessment). The second administration is designed to give candidates meaningful feedback for improvement (candidate assessment). These data provide the OC, as well as each program, formative data for

continuous improvement. The third administration is designed to give candidates meaningful feedback and all rubric criteria are used to give the individual programs summative data for continuous improvement.

Standing Education Unit committees and various group meetings provide the leadership for each administration. These committees/groups review the collected data, discuss and analyze results, and then close the assessment loop with annual action plans to improve outcome performance. Once a full cycle is completed, the collected data enable both cross-sectional comparisons as well as longitudinal repeated measure possibilities allowing both between-subjects and within-subjects analyses to inform all stakeholders on possible ways to improve. A schedule of assessment administrations for each Key Assessment is provided in the Assessment Protocols and Rubrics (III.8.5) exhibit.

The COEHS assessment system is sustainable in terms of personnel, data, and data management. Longitudinal data is maintained through the LiveText system and overseen by a full-time data manager who also provides all reports requested by committees or group leaders.

The integration of the Professional Development School Collaborative (PDS) at Cal U, connecting candidates and the QAS to educational leaders in the community, to provide real-life experiences for teacher education majors. Currently, six school districts in Southwestern Pennsylvania comprise the PDS at Cal U. Regular PDS Meetings (III.8.6) allow the teacher education process to gain input from the school districts hiring the program graduates. Program graduates are also a part of the responding population. Data from the graduates are included in the program assessment process from an alumni perspective.

During Fall 2019, the OC analyzed the two initial years of QAS data to produce both validity and inter-rater reliability measures. Small collaborative groups developed Data-Driven Decisions (III.8.7) for implementing changes needed to enhance educational knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for successful teacher education candidates.

At the institutional level, the new Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation and Director of Institutional Effectiveness looked to the COEHS QAS as a roadmap for the redesign of the campus-wide institutional effectiveness system discussed in Criterion 1 of this chapter. The redesigned university-wide assessment system includes many of the COEHS sustainability resources, including a full-time assessment leader for personnel sustainability as recommended by the 2010 Middle States visiting team, an institution-wide digital assessment management system (Nuventive) for data sustainability, and an Assistant to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to manage the data system.

## CONCLUSION

Cal U designs and delivers academic student learning experiences and support services characterized by rigor and relevance consistent with higher education expectations. Throughout the Standard III chapter, it has been demonstrated that Cal U academic programs and services are aligned with its strategic mission of providing a high-quality, student-centered education that prepares an increasingly diverse community of lifelong learners to contribute responsibly and creatively to regional, national, and global societies.

Compliance is also demonstrated with the University's IPs 1 and 4 and RAs 8, 9, 10, and 15. Finally, the Standard III narrative provides clear evidence of compliance with the applicable seven of eight Middle States Commission Standard III Criteria for Accreditation.

### Strengths

- Many strengths for the design and delivery of the student experience have been identified by the Standard III Self-Study Working Group. First among many, is the quality of Cal U faculty. Over 93% of the full-time tenure-track and tenured faculty complement have earned doctorates in their discipline of expertise, or State System-approved terminal degree equivalencies, as a result of associated policies and a carefully designed standardized search process.



- Cal U students are also provided with excellent academic services from dedicated academic support areas, including the College of Education and Human Services teacher education student support system, Louis L. Manderino Library, Career and Professional Development Center, and the Center for Undergraduate Research. Each of these student support areas are actively engaged in periodic assessment to facilitate improvement of student success in their respective service areas.
- Institutional effectiveness, an area once considered a weakness for the University, is now a growing strength and has demonstrated incremental improvements each year since hiring a full-time Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, a full-time director of Institutional Effectiveness, an Assistant to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the acquisition of a State System-supported sustainable assessment data management system (Nuventive). The University also has implemented a revised, multi-dimensional General Education Program assessment process, revised institution-wide annual assessment process for both academic programs and administrative units in support of student success, and a notable revision of its periodic State System program review process utilizing program performance criteria based from the Robert C. Dickeson “Academic Program and Evaluation and Prioritization” model.
- Finally, per Goal 1, Objective 1.1 of the 2015-21 Strategic Plan, Cal U continues to validate rigor and relevance in its academic programs through external national certification and accreditations. Currently, 53% of Cal U’s active degree majors have earned national accreditations, and the University continues to seek additional program accreditations where appropriate.

### Challenges

- Like many higher education institutions, Cal U is confronting enrollment and financial challenges. During the past eight years, Cal U experienced continuous annual enrollment decreases totaling a 26.6% enrollment loss (almost 2,400 FTE students). As a result of this decline, there has been a cumulative negative impact on the financial health of the University.
- Another challenge has been the development and implementation of a “culture of assessment.” Cal U has made remarkable progress with this IP during the past two years. However, as with all cultural change, Cal U has experienced different degrees of resistance from some areas of the University regarding submittals of requested compliance documents. Also, there have been some unexpected delays acquiring needed support personnel and systems for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the annual assessment process.

### Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

The following opportunities for improvement and innovation are provided to inform the direction and scope of the 2021-16 Cal U Strategic Planning process for the design and delivery of the student experience.

- Create a specific strategic goal for the 2021-26 Strategic Plan to improve the culture of assessment at Cal U per self-study IP 4 with three outcomes: sustainability of OIE personnel and assessment data, 100% compliance rates for submission of annual *Assessment Plan and Results Reports* from all academic program and student success units, and 100% compliance rates for submission of periodic State System program reviews.
- Add a statement to all new faculty appointment letters indicating their expectation for leadership or participation in academic program assessment (annual, periodic State System, and/or General Education).
- *Academic Assessment Results Reports* should provide more comprehensive action plans based on the literature of best pedagogical practices in the science of teaching and learning. These plans should be prioritized for assessment-based funding (if needed) by the USAC and Budget and Planning Committee.
- Provide ongoing assessment and accreditation professional development for all administrative and

academic personnel.

- Develop an institutional funding model with appropriate incentives to sustain and improve resources (personnel, budget, and data) required for managing the revised annual and periodic (State System) academic program assessment processes.
- Establish administrative oversight for the General Education program at the provost- or dean-level and provide a budget line to appropriately fund incentives to sustain the revised annual General Education assessment process.
- Develop university-wide incentives for managers and academic program assessment leaders (including senior management) to be responsible for working with the OIE to ensure quality outcomes and the implementation of improvement-based action plans within their respective organizational units and to reward best-practice assessment processes, with incentives such as:
  - A fund to provide annual recognition and awards for best practices
  - Best-practice presentations through FPDC, TLC, or other forums
  - Implementation of best-practice assessment grant programs such as those at Penn State and Ohio State Universities
- Collaborate with the State System and other State System universities to obtain a system-wide license for a digital experience management system such as Qualtrics (preferred) to better support faculty research and academic program/administrative service assessment processes and obtain a system-wide license for a digital Curriculum Inventory Management (CIM) system.
- Merge the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) into one complementary unit to leverage the strengths of both units for providing better data and improved institutional effectiveness throughout the University.
- Develop and implement a process for assigning academic advisors to new students with a unit assessment outcome of achieving assigned advisors for 100% of new students each academic term.
- Collaborate through academic governance constituents to develop an effective program evaluation and prioritization process (based on accepted program performance criteria such as the Robert C. Dickeson model) to evaluate and rank academic programs from strongest to weakest.

## STANDARD IV

# Support of the Student Experience

*Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.*

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the Self-Study Report documents the ways in which California University of Pennsylvania (Cal U) supports student learning experiences; recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings; provides a support system that enhances the quality of the learning environment; and fosters student success. The chapter is organized by criteria. Criterion 5 is not applicable to Standard IV at Cal U. Requirements of Affiliation (RAs) 8 and 10, as well as three Institutional Priorities (IPs) (1 – enhancing the academic excellence and experience of our students; 3 – achieving optional enrollment in these challenging times; and 4 – continuous improvement by a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness) will be integrated into the remaining criteria per the Self-Study Design Document. The format for evidence inventory exhibits is: Standard (Roman).Criterion (Arabic).sequence # within Criterion (Arabic). Example: (IV.1.1). Additionally, exhibit (IV.1.0) is an exhibit of tables and figures within this chapter.

Students at Cal U have a vast network of opportunities available to them that are designed to augment their academic, social, professional, and personal growth. Efforts to support the student experience at Cal U extend through four primary divisions within the Cal U organizational structure: Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Administration and Finance. These divisions collaborate on all support systems that support the student experience.

### CRITERION 1

Cal U maintains high ethical standards in all phases of the recruitment and admissions processes. These include recruitment, timely and appropriate responses to student inquiries, admission selection, and scholarship awarding. Cal U complies with all National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) policies and procedures. NACAC ethical standards clearly align with the institutional goals set forth in the University's 2015-20 Strategic Plan (IV.1.1). Undergraduate students are admitted in accordance with the Admission to the University for Undergraduates Policy (IV.1.2) approved each year by the President's Cabinet and posted on the University's "Policies" website. Graduate students are admitted in accordance to the Graduate School Admissions Policy (IV.1.3). Students denied admission may appeal their decision through the Dean of Undergraduate Admissions or the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

Cal U is an academic community dedicated to the ideals of social justice and equal opportunity for all. Goal 3 of the University's 2015-20 Strategic Plan (IV.1.4) focuses on creating a transformative learning and working environment that promotes diversity through a culture of civility and inclusiveness.

The Equal Employment and Educational Opportunity (EEEE) unit of the Office of Human Resources reaffirms the University's commitment to social justice and diversity through the promotion of

understanding, tolerance, and respect for others. It also ensures that the University community understands and complies with federal and state laws and University policies with respect to equal opportunity, Affirmative Action, ADA, and Title IX. The University complies with federal and Pennsylvania state laws to admit students without regard to race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran. The University does not tolerate any type of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking, is considered by law to be a form of sexual discrimination and is, therefore, unacceptable as indicated on pages 681-682 of the Cal U 2019-20 Undergraduate Catalog (IV.1.5) and the Policy Statements and Compliance Procedures on EEO and Social Equity (IV.1.6).

The University's commitment to these issues is exemplified by its long-standing track record of strong student success centers, including the Human Resources EEO unit, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Education (which includes support for the LGBTQA+ community), Women's Center, Office of Academic Success, and Career and Professional Development Center. The Wellness Center, Counseling Center, and Office for Students with Disabilities also provide support for students with various physical, mental, and learning diagnoses.

### **Admissions Policies and Processes**

As a regional, state-owned institution, Cal U has a historic mission of providing access to higher education and meeting workforce needs for the region, the Commonwealth, and beyond. As a result, the University utilizes a holistic review of student credentials for admission. Professional staff are empowered to use their judgement in recommending a student be given full or conditional admission to the University.

Prospective first-year students are eligible for full admission with a cumulative weighted high school GPA of 2.5 or above. Students who fall below that benchmark are enrolled in the Support for Success (S4S) program (described later in this criterion narrative) during their first two years at Cal U. Admission strategies, in pursuance of the goals for the University, are outlined in the Enrollment and Recruitment Plan (IV.1.7). This plan, developed in Fall 2018, was the first comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan in the Office of Admissions and will be assessed at the end of the Spring 2020 semester.

At the graduate level, the collaborative enrollment management structure provides robust support for the University's graduate and professional students. The Graduate Admissions Website (IV.1.8) serves as a central resource for prospective and newly admitted students to research graduate programs. The website includes admission requirements, information on tuition and fee structure, financial aid, and program-specific support services. Graduate admissions counselors and program coordinators are available for assistance with the entire application process. A centralized online application system is used for all graduate programs.

### **Financial Awards Policies and Processes**

Obtaining the financial resources necessary to pay for higher education is a significant challenge for many Cal U students. The Financial Aid Office (FAO) plays a critical role in facilitating student success in this area. The University participates in all federal and state financial aid programs and assesses the financial needs of its students by compiling competitive aid packages that may include a combination of federal, state, and institutional grants/scholarships; federal loans; and work-study programs.

The FAO assumes major responsibility for administering financial aid and keeping students apprised of their status. The Financial Aid Website (IV.1.9) and page 658 of the 2019-20 Undergraduate University Catalog (IV.1.5) convey information on tuition and fees, refund policies, financial aid, grants, loans, and scholarships.

Most Cal U students receive some form of financial aid. Nearly 2,500 students qualify for Pell Grant awards, with 65% of that group having a zero Expected Family Contribution. Cal U awards financial

aid on a rolling basis beginning in early December to students who are accepted to the University and have a valid FAFSA on file.

The FAO ensures that information about financial aid is available to undergraduate and graduate students in an efficient, understandable, and timely manner. When graduate or undergraduate students are considering Cal U, they are provided with a detailed explanation of their costs for tuition, fees, room, and board. A breakdown of housing options and meal plans is also provided online. Finally, in accordance with State System policy, an interactive Net Price Tuition Calculator (IV.1.10) is provided as a means of estimating aid and cost of attendance. In addition, the Student Accounts Website (IV.1.11) provides information related to advanced tuition deposits, international tuition deposits, payment plans, and refunds.

Once admitted, students may be awarded a variety of Scholarships (IV.1.12), including a Vulcan Merit Scholarship. This four-year award requires that students maintain a yearly cumulative 2.50 GPA. Awards are based on a scholarship matrix, created in 2015 in consultation with Ruffalo Noel-Levitz (RNL). First-time students are guaranteed an award based on their SAT or ACT score and their high school GPA. Additionally, once FAFSA information is received, students may be awarded need-based scholarships using a proprietary formula developed by RNL.

The Financial Aid Matrix was expanded in 2016 to provide merit-based scholarships for transfer students with qualifying GPAs. Also, in 2017, the Scholarship Committee adjusted criteria to provide annual scholarships to first-year students who were not awarded a merit scholarship because they met only one of the academic criteria, which previously had made them ineligible. Table IV.1 depicts a significant increase in the number of merit- and need-based scholarships awarded to first-year students from 2017 through 2019.

**Table IV.1: First-year student merit and need-based scholarships**

	Vulcan Merit			Need-Based			Vulcan & Need-Based			TOTALS		
	Confirmed	Enroll Rate	Expense	Confirmed	Enroll Rate	Expense	Confirmed	Enroll Rate	Expense	Confirmed	Enroll Rate	Expense
<b>Fall 2017</b>	232	25%	\$451,850	166	41%	\$270,078	101	37%	\$137,968	499	31%	\$859,896
<b>Fall 2018</b>	342	28%	\$472,900	129	51%	\$255,300	253	40%	\$817,442	724	34%	\$1,545,642
<b>Fall 2019</b>	476	28%	\$701,800	36	43%	\$54,700	242	42%	\$1,586,312	754	32%	\$2,342,812

The Office of Academic Success (OAS) monitors scholarship compliance and serves students who are academically at risk or who require financial aid appeals. The appeal decisions are made quickly so that students are provided opportunities for reinstatement of financial aid and leaves of absence. All appeals are reviewed by an admissions counselor, the Associate Vice President of Academic Success, and the Director of Financial Aid.

### **New Student Orientation**

Orienting students to the University is vital to ensure a successful start. Newly accepted students are invited to campus for a New Student Orientation (NSO) [see NSO Agenda (IV.1.13)]. NSO sessions are scheduled throughout the summer, with a special session scheduled for transfer students. During NSO, students receive an overview of the University, requirements for their degree program and tentative class schedule, Program Advisement Sheets (IV.1.14), General Education Courses (IV.1.15), and course information per a NSO Personal Handout (IV.1.16). Academic counselors also aid students in finalizing their schedules when needed.

Once schedules are confirmed, counselors provide information about learning resources, service options, directions for accessing the VIP Student Portal, D2L learning management system, DegreeWorks degree audit system, Cal U email accounts, and placement testing via an NSO

Academic Counselors Presentation (IV.1.17). New students also are provided Academic Success Tips (IV.1.18) for studying, preparing for classes, classroom behavior, and time management using a Cal U planner.

During NSO, students are offered opportunities to ensure that their financial aid is in place, learn how to enroll in a payment plan, establish FERPA permissions in the online Parent/Guest Portal, and set up their electronic devices through the campus Wi-Fi network. The Parent/Guest Portal provides information about deadlines, community and campus events, and available student resources.

Recent efforts have been made to improve student retention through careful analysis of the relationship between student retention and NSO Attendance Patterns (IV.1.19). The NSO Committee's assessment identified a clear pattern demonstrating that students who attend spring orientation persist at a higher rate than those who enroll later in summer. In response, the committee recommended increasing the number of orientation sessions for May and June, with fewer in July and August. The 2020 dates were approved by the President's Cabinet in Fall 2019. A New NSO Schedule (IV.1.20) and Restructured NSO Program (IV.1.21) will be evaluated in subsequent retention studies.

Additionally, because of an ongoing concern about low participation in the S4S support program in recent years, the Success Center management team created and implemented an assessment-based action plan to improve awareness of the program through face-to-face, personal contact with parents and students during NSOs. Three related outcomes identified in the S4S 2019-20 assessment plan include: improved aggregate "Skill Profile" mean scores in the four Success Navigator skill areas; increased S4S student awareness of program requirements; and increased S4S academic resource knowledge as indicated in the 2019-20 S4S *Assessment Plan Report* (IV.1.22).

### **Supporting Underprepared Students**

The Success Center is a centralized resource providing guidance, study skills, and support to all students on campus. Trained graduate assistant coaches work with students to develop personalized academic plans, strengthen study skills, and provide support needed to achieve academic success [see Student Success Website (IV.1.23)]. The Success Center also offers Support for Success (S4S), a program designed for conditionally admitted students with a high school GPA < 2.5; and the Probationary Assistance (PASS) program, available for students on academic probation or who have been readmitted after dismissal per the Academic Standing Policy (IV.1.24).

S4S students are required to successfully complete the S4S program during their initial semester and repeat the program during their second semester if their first semester Cal U GPA is less than 2.5. The S4S program includes weekly small-group sessions, open study time, and one-on-one meetings. Sessions focus on topics that include goal setting, identifying campus resources, time management, study habits for success, and interacting with faculty. S4S students are initially given an online assessment using the ETS Success Navigator (IV.1.25) to measure non-cognitive skills. These scores are used by Academic Success staff to design appropriate interventions and remediation efforts. Recently, ETS cancelled production of the Success Navigator. The Success Center team is actively reviewing viable replacement options.

S4S students also are encouraged to participate in success workshops. Fall 2018 workshops offered for S4S and PASS students and the number of attendees for each workshop are displayed in (IV.1.0 Table IV.2). Students can make an appointment or walk in during posted office hours.

Data in Table IV.3 indicate positive relationships between the number of 1:1 S4S meetings and success workshops and overall semester GPA. Generally, as the number of attended S4S meetings and workshops increased, student GPAs improved. Weekly meetings are currently required and workshops are elective. Based on the stronger positive impact of workshop engagement, the Success Center staff implemented mandatory participation in at least five workshops for 2019-entering S4S students.

**Table IV.3: Relationship S4S 1:1 meetings, workshop participation, and average GPA**

Fall 2018 1:1 Meeting Attendance	# Students	Fall 2018 Avg. GPA	Fall 2018 Workshop Attendance	# Students	Fall 2018 Avg. GPA
0	60	1.102	0	88	1.179
1-2	49	1.629	1-2	22	2.151
3-4	9	2.117	3-4	10	1.611
5-6	12	1.977	5-6	17	2.362
7-8	13	2.653	7-8	3	2.607
			9-10	1	3.627

The Probationary Assistance (PASS) program for students on academic probation or who were readmitted after dismissal also provides one-on-one sessions with trained graduate assistants. Opportunities are provided for each student to create an academic plan for success. These students are required to visit the Success Center at least once a week throughout the semester for mandatory meetings and are encouraged to attend the elective success workshops described above. Assessment data also depict PASS students who engage in five or more meetings and three or more workshops achieving good academic standing by the end of their return semester (2.715 and 2.403 average GPAs, respectively).

### **Academic Tutoring and Student Support Services**

The mission of Academic Tutoring and Support Services is to foster academic support and success in core competence areas of writing, reading, and STEM fields. Support areas include the Cal U Writing Center, the Cal U Reading Clinic, the Cal U STEM Assistance Laboratory, the Cal U Tutoring Center, and a federally funded TRIO program. As of Summer 2019, these services operate and are managed as independent centers run by faculty from related undergraduate Colleges. The University is currently considering a proposal from the academic Deans to combine these academic support areas into a “Vulcan Learning Commons” (IV.1.26) as an opportunity for improvement and innovation discussed in the conclusion of the Standard IV report.

The Cal U Writing Center (CUWC) provides face-to-face and online writing assistance for Cal U undergraduate and graduate students in all academic majors and programs. Professionally trained undergraduate and graduate student writing consultants work with writers one-on-one and in small groups to help develop their ability to write effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes. In addition, the CUWC offers student workshops on writing-related topics and works closely with faculty to support student writing in specific courses.

Following a decreasing trend in student-requested writing consultations from 2016-18, the CUWC implemented an assessment-based action plan in 2018-19 to increase writing consultations. Activities included increased collaborations with faculty in developing departmental writing projects and use of social media and blogging platforms to reach out to student writers. These outreach efforts resulted in a 50% increase in the average number of consultation sessions from academic years 2016-18 to 2018-19 (IV.1.0 Table IV.4).

CUWC Post-Consultation Satisfaction Survey Results (IV.1.27) during the 2018-19 academic year indicated 97% of the 239 respondents agreed that the quality of the writing service was “excellent” or “very good.”

The Cal U Reading Clinic (CURC) provides one-on-one sessions with certified reading specialists. Interventions typically involve an initial assessment of the student’s reading level followed by implementation of needed strategies to improve reading comprehension. Since 2015, the CURC has employed the Nelson Denny Reading Inventory for pre- and post-test analyses to discern measurable gains in students’ reading comprehension. Combined data from all interventions since 2015 demonstrate a mean 6.8% pre- to post-test improvement (gain).

The Cal U STEM Assistance Lab (STEM Lab) helps students succeed in STEM-based programs and courses. The lab is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed by STEM Lab Assistants

(SLAs). The amount of tutorial assistance during the first two years averaged 555 students annually. However, a 127% increase in tutorial assistance occurred during the 2018-19 academic year, due in part to an increase in tutoring requests from students in online programs.

The STEM Lab also assists the Office of Academic Success with Mathematics Assessment and Placement (CMAP) testing for incoming students, using the online Pearson MyMathTest™. SLAs receive training on a variety of pedagogical topics that include Bloom's taxonomy, metacognition, motivation, study skills, and learning technologies. During 2017-18, multiple training sessions were provided on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, and in 2018-19, the Cal U Teaching and Learning Center was instrumental in training SLAs to use Zoom conferencing to address online tutoring needs.

As part of the University's commitment to continuous improvement, a pilot study undertaken by the STEM Lab director in Fall 2018 investigated different approaches for online tutoring using Zoom conferencing technology for online Study Groups (SG) and for Supplemental Instruction (SI). Results showed a higher percent of SI students earning grades of C or higher (74%) than non-SI student participants (56%) in two sections of BUS 281 (Management Science) per the 2018-19 Annual STEM Lab Report (IV.1.28). Because of these encouraging results, SI was expanded to two additional sections of Management Science and two sections of Discrete Mathematics. This initiative will be further expanded in the 2019-20 academic year to General Chemistry, College Algebra, and Calculus I. Students receiving STEM tutorial assistance offer feedback through an "Assistance Session Feedback Survey". Fall 2016 to Spring 2019 survey results are also provided in the Annual STEM Lab Report.

The Cal U Tutoring Center (CUTC) regularly serves to assist student success in content-specific courses. Although the number of tutoring hours provided by the CUTC varies across academic semesters, the year-to-year use of the CUTC by Cal U students has increased by 56% from 2015-17, as indicated in (IV.1.0 Table IV.5).

Cal U also has a federally funded TRIO program for students who are low-income, disabled, or first-generation. The program provides opportunities for academic, social, cultural, and career development through programming, support, and academic services. TRIO also serves to motivate students toward successful completion of their post-secondary education. Program students receive priority registration, financial literacy and planning support (including scholarships), personal development workshops, tutoring, mentorship, learning communities, graduate school planning, and grant aid (for those that meet criteria). Students may also participate in cultural enrichment opportunities offered both on- and off-campus.

### **The Office for Students with Disabilities**

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) is the University-designated provider of services for students with neurological and physical disabilities who can, with assistance, overcome barriers to learning. OSD complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Beyond complying with the law, OSD is dedicated to supporting Cal U students by providing reasonable accommodations to those with documented disabilities per the OSD Website and Service Application (IV.1.29).

In support of the University mission, OSD works with registered students and consults with faculty, staff, other students, parents, and community members regarding access concerns, disability awareness, and resources, as well as opportunities for those with disabilities. It collaborates with many other departments, coordinating services such as counseling, student advisement, scheduling, housing, health-related issues and needs, financial aid, tutoring and study habits, and student learning.

The number of students served by OSD increased during the past four consecutive years. OSD experienced a 36% overall gain from Fall 2015 (187 students) to Fall 2018 (254). The largest year-to-year increase in service occurred in 2018, following implementation of an assessment plan outcome to "increase use of OSD services by 10% for the Fall 2018 semester." The outcome was exceeded with a 14% increase from Fall 2017 (222) to Fall 2018. Improvement strategies employed to reach the



10% benchmark, identified in the department's 2018-19 *Assessment Results Report* action plan, included providing OSD information to new students prior to the start of the academic year through the University's admissions and enrollment processes. Additionally, OSD facilitated individual meetings with applicants during summer and winter breaks prior to the start of each semester.

OSD promotes self-advocacy and accessible academic learning for students with disabilities. By utilizing best practices, OSD fosters both access for students and attitudes that reflect an awareness of disability issues. Evidence of the program's effectiveness is suggested in an OSD Student Survey (IV.1.30) administered in 2018-19 to 289 OSD students (23% response rate). Eighty-eight percent agreed that their accommodations had a positive effect on their academic performance. The same number also agreed that working with OSD helped them advocate for themselves. Additionally, 35% had a 3.1 or above cumulative GPA at the end of the Spring 2019 semester.

### **Academic Advising and the Academic Advising Committee**

Please refer to Standard III, Criterion 3 for this narrative.

### **Academic Success Programming**

Academic success programming includes First-Year Experience classes, Learning Communities, the Peer Mentoring Program, Academic Counselors, and a Four-Year Graduation Plan. First-Year Experience (FYE) courses (UNI 100: First Year Seminar and UNI 101: Introduction to University Studies) are one-credit courses designed to give first-year students an opportunity to successfully make the academic and social transition to university life. FYE students are required to complete one of these courses during their initial semester. Specific learning outcomes and requirements are identified in the UNI 100 and 101 Syllabi (IV.1.31).

The FYE program is assessed annually as part of the university-wide assessment initiative. Results from the 2018-19 assessment cycle showed a four-year increase in FYE failure rates indicated in the its *Combined Plan-Results Report* (IV.1.32). In response to these concerning results, during the Spring 2017 semester, the Office of Academic Success implemented an early alert system through Starfish to allow staff to more quickly identify and contact struggling students.

A Cal U learning community is a group of students within an academic discipline who take a common set of classes during their first semester and, in some cases, a second semester. The learning communities provide high-impact opportunities for students to collaborate and learn together both within and outside the classroom. The FYE UNI 101: Introduction to University Studies class is an anchor course for the learning community. It is taught by a faculty member from the academic discipline of a cohort of students.

In Fall 2018, a survey administered to students enrolled in FYE UNI 100 and 101 provided comparative data for learning community (LC) and non-learning community (Non-LC) students. Respondents reported overall higher levels of academic engagement both inside and outside of the classroom than those reported by Non-LC students (IV.1.0 Table IV.6). The connection of *student engagement* is well established in higher education as a key strategy for enhancing both learning and *retention*. Evidence of this effect was corroborated in a Fall 2018 to Spring 2019 retention study comparing 411 LC students to 448 Non-LC students. Results demonstrate an 88.81% retention rate for LC students and an 86.83% rate for Non-LC students. While the difference between the retention rates of these groups was relatively small, it represents persistence of about a dozen students.

The Peer Mentoring Program initiative consists of current students who volunteer to assist new students. Over the past 10 years, Cal U freshmen with a peer mentor have returned for their sophomore year at a 10%-13% higher rate than freshmen without peer mentors. The program is also open to transfer students during their first year at Cal U. In Fall 2018, 386 peer mentors assisted 692 students. In addition, the University provides work-study opportunities to 21 peer mentor coordinators who facilitate peer mentoring relationships with new students and assist faculty in the UNI 100 and 101 courses by providing student perspectives on various topics.

Full-time academic counselors assist students with course scheduling needs and provide information on academic policies and procedures, as well as general education and major requirements. They also assist students exploring majors. Counselors provide workshops for students including, but not limited to, DegreeWorks, VIP navigation and the use of registration tools, and understanding program advising maps. Academic counselors also conduct workshops for faculty on the idiosyncrasies and updates in DegreeWorks and VIP.

The Four-Year Graduation Plan is a commitment to help baccalaureate students stay on track and earn their college degree in four years. The program helps students set academic goals, create clear academic plans, and stay on track by following program guidelines and requirements. Students are enrolled in the Four-Year Graduation Program when they begin taking classes each fall semester. The program has increased 107%, from Fall 2015 (212 students) to Fall 2019 (442). Data indicate that many students leave the program because they fail to meet with their advisor on a regular basis. Efforts to improve this deficit are in process and described in Standard III, Criterion 3 regarding the improvement of academic advising.

## CRITERION 2

The transfer of credits into Cal U is governed by PASSHE Student Transfer Policy 1999-01-A (IV.2.1). The statewide transfer system promotes a seamless transfer process for students currently attending Pennsylvania community colleges or universities in the Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (State System/PASSHE). Eligible students are granted acceptance at a State System institution with transfer and acceptance of course credits. Information for transfer students, including articulation agreements, requirements, and steps for evaluation of transfer credits, is available at the University's Transfer Admission Website (IV.2.2).

Beginning in Fall 2018, congruent with its mission to improve access to higher education, Cal U enhanced prospective students' abilities to transfer with a Cal U Transfer Credits for Undergraduate Policy (IV.2.3). Under this policy, grades of "D" or higher are considered for transfer credit; however, the transferability of this credit is subject to contexts of individual program accreditations and prerequisite requirements to advance onto upper-level courses. This improves the ability of students to count their completed coursework toward their degree, but respects quality and academic freedom of the faculty.

### Prior Learning Assessment

Cal U recognizes that students with prior work, military experience, personal growth, volunteer work, or credential training may be able to earn relevant credit as described on the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Website (IV.2.4). PLA allows certain students to receive academic credit for learning acquired through qualifying life experiences. Earning PLA credit requires students to demonstrate they have met the course outcomes by developing a portfolio that showcases their experiential learning. PLA Portfolios (IV.2.5) are reviewed by a Cal U faculty member and, if approved, students are charged a fee of \$100 per credit.

Students also may earn Cal U credits through Prior Learning by Certificate. This program allows students with a specific industry-recognized credential that has been pre-approved by an academic department to earn PLA credits. Students are required to show they have earned the credential and complete a verification form. The credits are then applied to their Cal U transcript at no cost to the students. PLA credits are not eligible for tuition remission by Cal U employees and are not covered by financial aid.

The number of PLA credits that students were able to earn during a three-year period (Spring 2017 to Fall 2019) can be found in (IV.1.0 Table IV.7).

### Competency-Based Assessment

Students are encouraged to reduce their time to completion by earning up to 30 undergraduate credits through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and/or DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST) standardized exams, also described at the Cal U PLA Website. The CLEP-DSST University

Policy (IV.2.6) outlines specific details related to the examinations.

The summary of CLEP and DSST attempted and passed during a four-year period (Fall 2015 to Spring 2019) can be found in (IV.1.0 Table IV.8).

Students also may choose to challenge a course for which they are enrolled. The Credit by Examination - Course Challenges Policy (IV.2.7) provides a summary of how to file for a Course Challenge using the appropriate form.

### CRITERION 3

#### Secure Maintenance of Student Records

In order to ensure the secure maintenance of student records, Cal U follows FERPA guidelines. Information is not released without the student's permission. All employees who deal with student records must take and pass online FERPA training provided by AACRAO. Electronic records are stored on the Banner Student Information System (SIS) and a secure login is required to access those records. Student workers who have access to student records are required to sign a confidentiality agreement every term. The University vice presidents are responsible for maintaining student records within their respective administrative areas in accordance with the Confidentiality of Records Policy (IV.3.1).

### CRITERION 4

#### Student Affairs Programming

The vision of Student Affairs is "... to provide programs, services, and facilities to the University community resulting in engaging, meaningful, and transformative learning opportunities." Therefore, the division works collaboratively within the University and surrounding community to provide student-centered programs, services, and activities in support of student learning and development, including personal, social, and leadership skills. Student Affairs programs and service areas are depicted in (IV.1.0 Table IV.9).

The Division of Student Affairs utilizes the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) model to guide the division's pursuit of excellence in obtaining its goals and outcomes. The CAS model contains a set of standards, guidelines, and self-assessment strategies for use in higher education student affairs, student services, and student development programs. All student support units develop plans using these guidelines, which include the development of mission statements for each area and the assessment of student learning and operational outcomes. Each unit submits data and use of results annually to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The results of annual *Assessment Plan Reports* feed into the yearly plan for improvement of programming further described in Criterion 6.

#### Co-curricular and Extracurricular Experiences

Student Life programs and activities are an integral part of the educational process and are guided by the Student Affairs Strategic Plan (IV.4.1). A November 2019 Student Affairs Strategic Plan Periodic Update (VI.4.2) is provided in the evidence inventory.

The Office of Student Affairs encourages students to explore a wide range of extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities including enhancing personal, social, and leadership skills. A majority of these initiatives are organized through the Director of Student Activities and Programming/Leadership. The Director works closely with Student Government, which serves as the governing body of 100+ clubs and organizations (IV.4.3) and their 2,106 active members. The clubs and organizations represent the full spectrum of students served; they include media, academic, faith-based, multicultural, performing, sports clubs, campus activities, service organizations, and special interest clubs. Student Government minutes for the past three years are available upon request.

Academic excellence is a priority of Fraternity and Sorority Life (IV.4.4). The Director provides members with a variety of academic support options to enable students to reach and maintain their academic goals. The overall Panhellenic organization students outperformed the overall student body

for Spring 2019 with a mean 3.24 GPA compared to a mean 2.95 GPA respectively.

The Center for Volunteer Programs and Service Learning (VPSL) serves as a catalyst for students to partner with, build, and sustain meaningful service initiatives with communities surrounding Cal U. Students enhance their learning and leadership development by engaging in educationally purposeful and diverse co-curricular experiences through volunteer opportunities. During the 2017-18 academic year, 1,192 students logged 10,684 community service hours, and during the 2018-19 academic year, 1,086 students logged 10,080 community service hours.

Because of VPSL outreach, the Center collaborated with the Social Work, Sociology, Business, Sport Management, and Physical Therapy departments to provide increased opportunities for service learning.

### **Health and Wellness Care**

Health and Wellness Care (IV.4.5), provided by the Wellness Center, helps students address medical, personal, and academic issues. The Wellness Center consists of the Health Center, the Counseling Center, and Student Wellness Support.

The Health Center is staffed by a physician/medical director (who works 12 hours a week), a nurse practitioner, a nurse supervisor, and registered nurses. During the school year, the center is open Monday through Friday 24 hours a day, and Saturday and Sunday 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. During the summer, the Health Center is open 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Counseling Center faculty consist of a licensed psychologist as well as one licensed professional counselor and another seeking licensure. These therapists provide individual and group counseling to address difficult life situations, such as relationship distress, academic difficulties, and substance abuse, as well as mental health symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, and anger.

Students who are experiencing a mental health crisis are seen by Counseling Center faculty on a walk-in basis. After hours, University Police and Health Center staff work in conjunction with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Health Services agency, which provides 24/7 emergency mental health care. Additionally, Counseling Center faculty supervise interns who also provide counseling services to students, as well as triage services (brief consultations for students who request immediate care, but who are not in crisis). Counseling Center faculty and interns also provide referrals to students both on- and off-campus as needed.

The University has a formal agreement with a community psychiatrist who is available for psychiatric consultations. A new assessment instrument, CCAPS-34 (Counseling Center Assessment of Psychology of Symptoms), was implemented during the Fall 2019 semester to better track client symptoms across sessions. This instrument is normed on a college student population and will be more valid and reliable than the previous measure. Every client who presents for an individual session or crisis appointment receives the assessment. During the Fall semester, 325 individual students completed the CCAPS at their initial session and students who presented for a fourth session were administered a follow-up CCAPS assessment to monitor progress. The expected outcome benchmark for this process is that 33% of clients will meet a reliable change index criterion for improvement.

Additionally, recent continuous improvement efforts involved training Residence Life staff in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), a suicide prevention strategy for identifying residents who need assistance. Starting in Fall 2019, one common hour per month was scheduled for mental health training, called "Therapeutic Thursdays," for community assistants (CAs). This was designed as an informal safe space for CAs to talk openly with a counselor about the challenges of their work with struggling students. Two sessions were offered during the Fall 2019 semester (18 and 19 CAs participated) and three are scheduled for the Spring 2020 semester. Topics include "helping students with mental health concerns," "self-care and work-life balance," "conflict resolution," "stress management," and "healthy boundaries."

Student Wellness Support Services consists of four programming areas: Student Wellness Support, Prevention Awareness Recovery Center (PARC), Health and Wellness Education, and Alcohol and

Other Drug Education. A Director of Student Wellness Support Services was hired in 2018 to coordinate prevention, intervention, and support efforts across campus and community systems to assist at-risk students and students facing crises, life traumas, and other obstacles that impede success.

The Director provides student wellness support by meeting with students whose problems are impacting their well-being and developing an action plan for success, including referring them to appropriate on- or off-campus resources. In academic year 2018-19, 12 students participated in the program. Prior to their involvement, the mean GPA of participating students was 2.68; after receiving coordinated services, their mean GPA was 2.73.

PARC provides support, services, resources, and referrals for Cal U students in recovery from addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. Health and Wellness Education offers outreach efforts that promote health and wellness, such as the annual Cal U Health Fair and other educational awareness campaigns. Alcohol and Other Drug Education services identify at-risk students by helping to guide them in making healthy decisions regarding their substance use.

## **Athletics**

The Cal U Department of Athletics offers 18 intercollegiate sports – seven for men and nine for women – and competes at the NCAA Division II level. Cal U is a member of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC). The distribution of sports and athletes are as provided (IV.1.0 Table IV.10).

The Department of Athletics employs a Director of Academic Support for Student Athletes. This employee conducts daily study halls, assists with scheduling, arranges tutors, and provides other academic services for student athletes. Additionally, individual sports often offer study hall sessions for their student athletes. As a result of these efforts, student athletes persist and graduate at a higher rate than the overall University average. A three-year summary of semester and cumulative GPAs for each athletics program. During the past three semesters, Cal U athletics teams earned a 3.16 average cumulative GPA across all sports can be found in (IV.1.0 Table IV.11).

Cal U student athletes have been ranked in the top 50% for each of the past 10 years in terms of academic success rate, which is the NCAA's method of measuring the four-year graduation rate for student athletes. A 10-year comparison of Cal U's four-year athletic program graduation rates with average PSAC and average NCAA Division II counterparts (yellow highlighted cells). The Cal U average four-year graduation rate (over the last 10 years) is 82.8%. Also, a four-year (2014 to 2018) comparison of the four-year athletics graduation rate with the general Cal U student population was 80% for athletics compared with 38.6% for the general student population (IV.1.0 Table IV.12).

In 2018-19, the Department of Athletics developed an Athletics Strategic Plan (IV.4.6) and an Athletic Facilities Strategic Plan (IV.4.7). These plans outline the mission, goals, and objectives of the Department of Athletics for the next five years. The objectives and a progress report will be provided annually to the Provost and University President for evaluation. Some objectives of the plans have already been met. Most notably, the renovation of the softball field was recently completed.

The Department of Athletics benefits the University by providing academic success and well-rounded experiences for student athletes, as well as enhancing the positive campus atmosphere and climate of the student body.

## **CRITERION 5**

(Does not apply at Cal U)

## **CRITERION 6**

### **Annual Student Affairs Assessment**

Student Affairs program assessment occurs on both an annual and a periodic (program review) basis. The University's Institutional Effectiveness Website (IV.6.1) provides assessment policies, procedures, resources, and timelines. The website also includes a university-wide assessment model

for academic and administrative areas in support of the student experience.

The addition of a full-time Director of Institutional Effectiveness enables assessment to be centralized with administrative management, thus adding to its systemization and organization. The director of this office also serves as the communication conduit for the assessment process to campus and non-campus stakeholders (RA 8). Avenues of communication include university-wide email announcements, workshops, the revised Cal U Institutional Effectiveness Website, academic and administrative assessment monitoring tools, and executive assessment status reports.

All units/areas within the Student Affairs division are required to establish student learning outcomes (SLOs) and program outcomes (POs) to assess student learning and the effectiveness of programs and support services. The assessment of student learning and program outcomes are vital to the development of overall student success per Requirement of Affiliation 8 and Institutional Priorities 1, 3, and 4.

All units/areas are required to participate in an annual two-step process. First, a comprehensive administrative *Assessment Plan Report* (IV.6.2) is submitted to OIE early in the fall semester. The assessment plan requires a program mission statement, measurable student learning and program outcomes, and defensible standards for evaluation aligned with both the institution's mission and one or more goals of the division's strategic plan. Second, an administrative *Assessment Results Report* (IV.6.3) is submitted at the end of the spring semester that includes analyses of the outcomes. SLOs and POs drive the development of annual year-end reports for each Student Affairs unit/area. The OIE director, student affairs program-level assessment coordinator, and members of the Student Affairs Assessment Committee (SAAC) provide leadership within their division for the development and implementation of periodic, meaningful, useful, and efficient assessment plans.

The *Assessment Results Report* requires program-level assessment leaders to close the assessment "loop." Assessment data are analyzed and discussed at unit/area meetings, where data-driven action plans are developed to address identified areas of improvement based on assessment plan criteria not met. This approach allows input from everyone within the administrative unit, as well as feedback and consultation to improve program effectiveness. The *Results Report* also asks assessment leaders to identify areas of financial need (e.g., facilities, instrumentation, and personnel) to improve assessment outcomes as the initial input for Requirement of Affiliation 10, the process for linking assessment results to institutional planning and budgeting described in the "Budget Process Enhancement" section of the Standard VI Self-Study Report.

Once *Assessment Plan Reports* or *Assessment Results Reports* are submitted, an Administrative Support Services Monitoring Tool (IV.6.4) is used to track progress of all administrative units/areas. Progress is categorized in one of three "stop light" levels of readiness as displayed in Table IV.13.

**Table IV.13: Assessment levels of readiness (Plan and Results Reports)**

Status	Description
Green	On track with clear mitigation plans for any issues
Yellow	On track with known issues and defining mitigation plans
Red	Off track with no known mitigation

Administrators (Student Affairs vice president, associate vice presidents, associate deans, and assessment coordinator) responsible for commending progress from Student Affairs unit-level assessment leaders are provided periodic progress updates from the Executive Assessment Status Report (Plan) (IV.6.5) and (Results) (IV.6.6), and also assist with the facilitation of the assessment process throughout their respective units.

At the conclusion of each academic year, Student Affairs senior staff review unit *Results Reports* indicating a financial need to improve assessment outcomes per RA 10. The Student Affairs funding requests are prioritized for presentation to the University Strategic Assessment Committee (USAC). The Student Affairs Vice President presents assessment-related funding requests to the USAC. The USAC members prioritize and rank all University RA 10 funding requests and forward them to the

University Budget and Planning Committee for consideration.

As of December 2019, 100% of Student Affairs units submitted *Results Reports* for the 2018-19 assessment cycle and 100% of those same reports rated a green status on the Administrative Support Services Monitoring Tool. Additionally, an annual Administrative Inventory of Assessment Outcomes Report (IV.6.7) provides a snapshot of expected learning outcomes, assessment methods utilized, assessment results in relation to performance targets, descriptions of program enhancements made, or other actions taken in response to assessment data. With the recent purchase of the digital Nuventive assessment system, time-consuming manual updates to the administrative Excel-based assessment inventories will no longer be required.

### **The Assessment 360 Model and Periodic CAS Program Reviews**

The Student Affairs periodic program review process occurs on a Five-Year Assessment Cycle (IV.6.8) for all units. The red-highlighted years on the exhibit indicate the year scheduled for the program review. Generally, an average of three units are reviewed each year.

The program review process operates within a holistic “Assessment 360 Model” (IV.6.9). All quarterly and annual program/service reports over a five-year Reporting Cycle (IV.6.10) serve as inputs for the five-year periodic program review process. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) provides program evaluation criteria and rubrics (pages 14-27) in their Self-Assessment Guide (IV.6.11). These criteria are considered best practice measures for student-support units.

A Five-Year Program Review Procedure (IV.6.12) and Five-Year Program Review Timeline (IV.6.13) guide the program review process. The steps to the program review process include a Self-Study Report (IV.6.14); an Internal Review Committee created to review supporting documents, conduct interviews, and prepare an Internal Review Report (IV.6.15) that identifies strengths and weaknesses of the unit; and, finally, an Action Plan (IV.6.16), developed to incrementally improve identified unit weaknesses prior to the next program review. The sample five-year program review for these last three exhibits is Recreation Services. Program review documents for other Student Affairs units are available upon request.

### **Other Means of Student Affairs Assessment**

Student Affairs also uses student ratings on the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) to gauge progress with its strategic plan outcomes. Results from the survey and focus group sessions are the driving factors behind a number of initiatives the office has undertaken to better support and serve students, particularly in the development of New Student Affairs Planning Committees (IV.6.17) created to address trend assessments for 19 Student Affairs NSSE Measures (IV.6.18). Each committee is charged with developing goals for incrementally improving these measures.

For example, results of the seven 2015 and 2017 yellow-highlighted NSSE diversity variables indicated a need for improvement. The Diversity Committee created Monthly “What’s the T?” Panel Discussions (IV.6.19) for the 2018-19 academic year to discuss current issues in an open and relaxed atmosphere. When 2015 freshmen were compared with 2019 seniors, five of the seven variables in question showed an average 8.4% increase for the seniors (same cohort). Also, the “encouraging contact among students with different backgrounds” measure (NSSE 14D), increased by 12%. While there are many influences on responses to NSSE variables, this data is presented to exemplify attempts to address NSSE trend data.

Small samples plague not only outcomes assessment of Student Affairs programming, but also NSSE data (sample sizes ranged from 99 to 396). In order to better align proximal outcomes assessment to NSSE (distal) assessment of program impact, outcome measures for “What’s the T?” and other Student Affairs initiatives will include items that directly reflect NSSE measure content (e.g., asking respondents if they perceive having interacted with people of different backgrounds).

Additionally, the Student Affairs Council implemented various strategies to improve student relationships (measure 13D) with staff and helped them make the connection between curricular and

co-curricular experiences (measure 14B). Both measures increased an average of 4.5% from respondents' first-year to senior-year cohort. Targeted Programming Committee programming also may have had a positive influence on two of the three green-highlighted (14H and 15B) NSSE measures by an average of 20.5%. By contrast, the Retention Committee plan was not implemented during the 2018-19 academic year, and four of the seven blue-highlighted retention-related measures decreased an average of 11.5%. The planning committees have created goals based on the 2019 measures and will conduct assessments accordingly.

## **CONCLUSION**

Cal U commits to student retention, persistence, and graduation through a coherent and effective student success support system that is sustained by qualified professionals. Throughout the Standard IV chapter, it has been demonstrated that Cal U's initiatives in support of the student experience are aligned with its strategic mission.

Also demonstrated is compliance with the three Standard IV IPs (enhancing academic excellence, achieving optimal enrollment, and creating a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness in all student support areas) and two RAs (8 - systematic evaluation of programs and 10 - integrated planning and budgeting with the assessment of student learning support systems). Finally, the Standard IV narrative provides clear evidence of compliance with the applicable five of six Middle States Commission on Higher Education Standard IV Criteria for Accreditation.

### **Strengths**

The quality of the Cal U administrators and staff who facilitate and support the student experience. The hiring process for student support area staff is extensive and rigorous, with required qualifications and expectations carefully designed to support and facilitate student success.

Cal U students are also provided with excellent programs and services from the following dedicated support areas: a strong commitment to the access mission in admissions; a multitude of financial aid opportunities for students of low-income families; an improved process for recruiting and orienting new students with a focus on retention and persistence; caring academic tutoring and support services staff (e.g., Writing Center, Reading Clinic, STEM Assistance Lab, and Athletics Academic Support Services); a commitment to support optimum education opportunities for students with disabilities; outstanding health and wellness care services; and a rich cadre of Student Affairs programming/services options and resources.

More specific program strengths in support of the student experience include:

- Positive relationships for first-year engagement in academic success programming (S4S, peer mentoring, and academic counseling) with higher semester GPA averages and freshman-to-sophomore retention rates.
- Higher mean (almost 10%) GPA for Student Affairs Panhellenic organization members compared with the overall student body.
- Office for Students with Disabilities, where 35% of supported students achieved above a 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the Spring 2019 semester.
- Academic Tutoring and Support Services (Writing Center, Reading Clinic, STEM Assistance Laboratory, and Tutoring Center) and a federally funded TRIO program, which have had a positive impact on student success at Cal U.
- Athletics Academic Success programming, which facilitated a 3.16 GPA across all sports during the past three semesters and an 82.8% four-year graduation rate across all sports during the last 10 years.
- Finally, institutional effectiveness, an area once considered a weakness for the University, is now growing in strength. The initiatives implemented have resulted in incremental improvements each year since hiring a full-time Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, a full-time



Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the acquisition of a State System-supported sustainable assessment data management system (Nuventive). For example, Student Affairs earned 100% compliance and 100% green status ratings for all unit submissions of final *Assessment Results Reports* during the initial 2018-19 assessment cycle of the revised annual assessment process.

- In support of the student experience, Cal U has been able to recruit a cadre of highly qualified administrators and staff, as well as superb leadership in many academic and administrative service areas. These individuals have greatly assisted the institutional effectiveness staff with this cultural change. Moreover, greater cooperation across the University has been noticed.

### **Challenges**

- During the past eight years, Cal U experienced continuous annual enrollment decreases. There has been a cumulative negative impact on the financial health of the University, leading to a reduction of non-faculty staff by 22.3% and non-represented administrators by 17.3%. Some non-faculty staff also have taken on multiple roles to maintain programmatic and service areas. Cal U cannot continue reducing personnel resources that might negatively affect the overall quality of programs and services in support of the student experience.
- Another challenge has been the development and implementation of a “culture of assessment.” Cal U has made remarkable progress with this Institutional Priority during the past two years. However, as with all cultural change, Cal U has experienced different degrees of resistance from some areas of the University regarding submission of requested compliance documents. Also, there have been some unexpected delays acquiring needed support personnel and systems for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the annual assessment process.
- The University also has seen an increase in students presenting with mental health issues as identified by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Provost. In 2018-19, 251 students were seen for depression and anxiety; 54 of them were in crisis. In Fall 2019, 248 students were seen for depression and anxiety, including 65 in crisis.

### **Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation**

The following opportunities for improvement and innovation are provided to inform the direction and scope of the 2021-16 Cal U strategic planning process for academic and administrative support of the student experience.

- Add a statement to all professional staff appointment letters and job descriptions indicating the expectation for leadership or participation in annual assessment.
- Provide ongoing assessment and accreditation professional development for all administrative and academic personnel.
- Develop an institutional funding model with appropriate incentives to sustain and improve resources (personnel, budget, and data) required for managing the revised annual and periodic program/unit assessment processes.
- Develop university-wide incentives for managers and administrative program assessment leaders (including senior management) to be responsible for working with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to ensure quality outcomes and the implementation of improvement-based action plans within their respective organizational units and to reward best-practice assessment processes, with incentives such as:
  - A fund to provide annual recognition and awards for best practices
  - Best-practice presentations through FPDC, TLC, or other forums
  - Implementation of best-practice assessment grant programs at mature assessment colleges and universities
- Increase student engagement to enhance the student experience by:

- Expanding the leadership program offered through Student Affairs
- Developing co-curricular mapping of experiences offered through Student Affairs (e.g., identify competencies to map, identify experiences that can produce outcomes, and connect the competencies with the experiences)
- Address the growing mental health challenges that students face and ensure that adequate staffing is available in the Counseling Center.
- Work with University Development to enhance fundraising opportunities for scholarships.
- Merge and centralize academic student support services (STEM Assistance Lab, Writing Center, Reading Clinic, and the Tutoring Center) in one central location. This would create a comprehensive learning entity (possibly named the Vulcan Learning Commons) to improve and better evaluate the impact of coordinated academic services on student retention and success.
- Conduct a systems audit of the functions in the Office of Academic Success to analyze its effectiveness and efficiencies. This includes resource allocation, processes, personnel, and outcomes.

## STANDARD V

# Educational Effectiveness Assessment

*Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.*

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the Self-Study Report documents the ways in which Cal U meets the standard of educational effectiveness assessment. The chapter is organized around the process of educational effectiveness assessment and will highlight how Cal U fulfills the five Criteria (designated as [C] in this chapter), three Requirements of Affiliation (RAs) (8, 9 and 10), and two Institutional Priorities (IPs) (1 – enhancing academic excellence and 2 – creating a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness) identified in the Self-Study Design document for Standard V. Criterion is not consistently sequential throughout the Standard and is often integrated within an overall evaluation or assessment approach. The narrative will refer to documents that serve as evidence for the claims about Cal U's compliance with MSCHE Standard V. The format for evidence inventory exhibits is: Standard (Roman).Criterion (Arabic).sequence # within Criterion (Arabic). Example: (V.1.1)

### CRITERION 1

#### Overview of Assessment Practices

Under the leadership of the Associate Provost for Accreditation and Assessment, Cal U has taken several steps to build the university-wide assessment infrastructure and capacity in departments and programs as called for in Objective 2.1: develop a culture of accountability and improvement through university-wide assessment of Cal U's Strategic Plan, and IP 4: creating a comprehensive system of institutional assessment. Five important initiatives undertaken recently in support of this goal are:

1. **Developed and implemented a revised university-wide assessment model.** Please refer to Standard III, Criterion 1 for this narrative.
2. **Implemented assessment management system software** (Nuventive) as a repository for annual assessment of academic programs and non-academic units in support of the student experience, General Education Program assessments, and for academic periodic program reviews. The software system is an application for inputting, storing, organizing, cataloging, and reporting on documents related to outcomes assessment in the University's academic and non-academic departments. More specifically, it allows the University to: better track and organize evidence of student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment where it exists; identify departments and programs that need support to conduct periodic and impactful assessment of student learning; share examples of exemplary assessment documents, including the development or revision of curricular maps across departments; and facilitate the ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes assessment. Prior to Nuventive, a Team Drive was set up as a repository that allowed departmental assessment leaders as well as administrators to upload documents related to academic and non-academic assessment into program- and unit-specific folders for *Assessment Plans* and *Results Reports* and other assessment-related data, including Executive Assessment Status Reports [Plan (V.1.1) and Results (V.1.2)] and Inventories of Assessment of Outcomes [Academic (V.1.3) (Administrative (V.1.4)]. The repository provided a transparent means for information sharing and review of ongoing assessment work across all academic and non-academic programs.

3. **Created an Office of Institutional Effectiveness.** Please refer to Standard III, Criterion 1 for this narrative.
4. **Redesigned General Education assessment.** As detailed in Standard III, General Education outcomes were reformulated under three program-level General Education Outcome Areas for student learning: (I) Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis, (II) Critical and Creative Thinking, and (III) Communication and Community. The general process for assessing these Outcome Areas involves collecting and reviewing classroom assignments by trained faculty teams using holistic scoring criteria based on LEAP rubrics. The results are then compiled, analyzed, and reported in the aggregate. The results are reported to the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) which, in turn, reports to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs for planning purposes. The data is disseminated through the Chairs to the departments, and faculty act on assessment results for continuous improvement. The feedback from these assignments is designed to provide valuable information about the degree to which students are achieving the General Education institutional-level outcomes. The University also assesses students' attainment of General Education competencies as the percentage of students that meets or exceeds each performance criteria for program-level outcomes that align with, or are mapped into, General Education Outcome Areas. For further discussion of the General Education assessment process, see the General Education section of Standard III.
5. **Implemented a revised program review model.** The program review process was revised using program performance criteria based from the Robert C. Dickeson "Academic Program and Evaluation and Prioritization" model and integrated into the revised State System program review process (see Standard III, Criterion 1).

The University has three categories of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): 1) General Education (institutional) Outcome Areas, 2) academic program-level SLOs, and 3) non-academic units in support of student success SLOs. All academic programs at Cal U have clearly articulated SLOs, which map with institutional/General Education learning Outcome Areas and the University Strategic Goals [See exemplars of student learning outcomes in the Academic Inventory of Assessment of Outcomes (V.1.3)]. All courses have clearly articulated SLOs that are listed on course syllabi. Emphasis is placed on continuous improvement of course outcomes. General Education and non-academic outcomes are discussed later in this section.

### **Assessment of the Institutional Effectiveness System**

Cal U has been conducting assessment of academic program outcomes since 1990 (available upon request). Initially, institutional assessment was limited to accredited academic programs, mostly in the College of Education and Human Services, and a limited number of non-accredited program areas whose faculty were willing to participate in the established program-level assessment process in the College of Liberal Arts and the Eberly College of Science and Technology.

Prior to the 2014-15 academic year, the established institutional assessment process was led by an associate provost in the Academic Affairs division. The Nicholson Model of outcomes assessment was adopted and a process was established whereby all academic programs would identify educational goals, state measurable learning outcomes, and evaluate those outcomes on a five-year schedule. An Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO) committee was also established. No University personnel (faculty or staff) were dedicated full-time to the institutional assessment process. Also, while the process was systematic and meaningful for those engaged, it was not a useful or efficient process for most programs. Many of the over 250 Cal U academic programs did not participate in this process.

The previous ASLO assessment process was also not sustainable from a leadership or data-management perspective. Although the previous Associate Provost responsible for institutional assessment retired in 2014, the position was not replaced until Spring 2017. During that time, although many departments continued the process of assessment for programmatic improvement, official submissions of annual program assessment reports into the designated repository (D2L)

dwindled from 65 to eight academic programs due to lack of university-level management oversight. A similar outcome also occurred with systemic Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (State System) periodic program review reports.

In Summer 2017, a new Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation was hired and worked during Fall 2017 with the Self-Study Oversight Team to create the Cal U Self-Study Design Document (V.1.5) and redesign the Cal U Institutional Effectiveness (Assessment) Website (V.1.6).

During the Spring of 2018, Cal U's first full-time Director of Institutional Effectiveness was hired to direct several initiatives: develop an institutional effectiveness leadership team; create a systemic, meaningful, useful, and efficient assessment process for academic and other areas of the University that affect the student experience; create a Cal U Institutional Effectiveness (Assessment) Website; and improve the sustainability of assessment data with a digital system and an Assistant to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to maintain and operate the system. The success in each of these areas is discussed below.

## CRITERION 2

### **Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Team (2-c)**

The Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Team is comprised of two managers and two faculty members: the Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, a senior-level faculty assessment liaison (Chairperson of the Psychology Department), a junior-level rising faculty assessment leader (and Self-Study Co-chair from the Psychology Department), and an Assistant to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

### **Revised Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Process (2-c)**

During Summer 2017, the institutional effectiveness assessment leadership team developed a systemic, meaningful, useful, and efficient assessment process based on the Nicholson model for continuity of process and familiarity by users, for academic, administrative, and support units of the University that affect the student experience as required in RA 8 and IP 4 in the Cal U Self-Study Design (V.1.5) [2c].

Four annual assessment oversight committees were developed to guide, oversee, evaluate, and provide feedback to strategic, academic, and other areas of the University that affect the student experience: the University Strategic Assessment Committee (USAC), Academic Program Assessment Committee (APAC), Student Affairs Assessment Committee (SAAC), and Administrative and Educational Support Assessment Committee (AESAC) [see Assessment Committee Roles and Responsibilities (V.2.1) [2c]].

The USAC consists of administrative representation from the Office of the President and Office of the Provost in addition to a graduate student and representative members from each of the APAC, SAAC, and AESAC committees. The USAC is charged with the periodic evaluation of strategic University outcomes and directly linking the University planning and budgeting process, RA 10, to achievement of strategic and APAC, SAAC, and AESAC outcomes detailed in [see Summary of Funding Requests Based on 2018-2019 Outcomes Assessment (V.2.2) [3e]].

The timeline for the revised annual assessment process for all assessment committees is for programs and units to review their mission statement, identify SLOs, criteria for success, and methods of gathering data in the Fall semester. Faculty, staff, and administrators begin entering completed assessment plans in Cal U's *Assessment Plan Report Template* [Academic (V.2.3); Administrative (V.2.4)] [2c] which was replaced by Nuventive software in Fall 2019 to streamline the process and allow for cross-communication between programs and budgeting decisions. In October, *Assessment Plan Reports* are submitted to unit assessment committees. Programs and units begin gathering data after submission of the *Assessment Plan Report*. From November to March, the units adjust their plans in response to unit Assessment Committee Feedback Rubrics and Reports (V.2.5) [2c]. Throughout the Spring semester, units continue to collect data, analyze it, discuss results, determine their meaning, and create action plans in response to the findings. Units enter completed assessment

results into the Nuventive program. An annual *Assessment Results Report* [Academic (V.2.6) and Administrative (V.2.7)] is submitted to the appropriate unit assessment committee via Nuventive by April 15. During the summer, final APAC, SAAC, and AESAC assessment reports and requests for funding based on assessment results are presented to the USAC for consideration in the planning and budgeting process for the next fiscal year budget.

### **Educational Effectiveness of Academic Program Assessment (2-a & b)**

While the name and make-up of the academic assessment committee has changed over the years, its membership has consistently been comprised of appropriate and experienced academic faculty and administration, and the mission has been to guide, oversee, evaluate, and provide feedback on academic program assessments to academic assessment leaders [see APAC 2019-20 Committee Members (V.2.8) and Responsibilities of APAC (V.2.1) [2c]].

The first goal identified in the Cal U 2015-20 Strategic Plan is to “enhance the academic excellence and experience of our students.” This is also the first IP in the Self-Study Design. Evidence of the achievement of this goal (and IP) is found in periodic Executive Assessment Status Reports – Plans (V.1.1) [2a] and – Results (V.1.2) [2b] and ongoing efforts to accredit all Cal U programs that are capable of being accredited through national and international professional accreditation agencies. Currently, 58 of more than 109 undergraduate and graduate major programs are accredited by National Accrediting Bodies (V.2.9). Many of these accredited programs have mature, robust assessment processes, and require a rigorous, systematic assessment process and reporting of results in reaccreditation submissions.

Academic programs within the University’s Academic Affairs division are organized into three undergraduate Colleges: Education and Human Services, Liberal Arts, and Eberly Science and Technology, and the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Each program has a College or School assessment coordinator [2c] who has experience in program-level assessment and accreditation. The program assessment coordinators provide leadership within their Colleges or School to implement meaningful, useful, and efficient program-level assessment. In addition to academic programs, assessment leaders are appointed for every administrative and educational support unit on campus [see Assessment Monitoring Tools (AMTs) Academic (V.2.10) [2b] and Administrative Support (V.2.11) [2b]]. Discussions of assessment results are held in every area.

All programs that result in a listing on student transcripts are required to have a plan for assessing outcomes and must submit results reports that indicate continued pursuit of excellence (Institutional Priority 1). Programs designated as a major, concentration, or certificate are included. Minors are not included because they are typically individualized courses of study by each student with few common core courses. The lack of a set of core courses prohibits a common curriculum, which makes assessing outcomes in minors difficult.

As outlined above, the academic program assessment process is a two-step endeavor with an *Assessment Plan Report (Plan Report)* [2a] submitted to the APAC in the fall and a final *Assessment Results Report (Results Report)* [2b] in the spring. The *Plan Report* requires a clearly stated department or program mission statement, measurable program outcomes, defensible standards for success aligned with the institution mission, and alignment to one or more goals of the current Strategic Plan, regardless of certificate, degree level, or delivery per RA 9.

The *Results Report*, due in the spring, requires program assessment leaders to close the assessment “loop” through an analysis of program outcome achievements and data-based decisions to either change or maintain the education process to sustain or improve student learning. The two-step approach allows for more opportunities for feedback and consultation to improve educational effectiveness as compared to the previous one-step Year-End Report process that was in place prior to 2018. The one-step approach did not allow for ASLO to assist program leaders in refining their assessment plans until after data collection had already occurred. The two-step approach places the new APAC committee directly in the process of assessment development for every department.

*Plan Reports* are submitted and feedback is offered to the program assessment leaders, College

Deans and Academic Affairs administrators (President and Provost), who are kept apprised of the assessment process status of each academic program with an Academic Programs Monitoring Tool – Plan & Results Reports (V.2.10) [3d]. This monitoring tool categorizes every program into one of three levels of “readiness:” **Green** = submitted and contains a clear plan; **Yellow** = submitted and on-track, key milestones need to be addressed; or **Red** = submitted with milestones incomplete or not submitted.

As of December 2019, 90% of academic programs submitted a *Plan Report* with 90% of the reports rated with a green status. Also, as of December 2019, 75% of programs submitted a *Results Report* with 74% of the reports in the green status (V.2.10).

The addition of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) has enabled assessment to be centralized, thus adding to its systematization and organization [C1]. The Director also serves as the communication conduit for the assessment process and distributes the results to the campus and non-campus community (e.g., the general public, administration, faculty, staff, students, and potential students) [C2c, C3f and RA 8]. Avenues of communication include Campus-Wide Announcements, Email (V.2.12) [3f], and the new public-facing Cal U Institutional Effectiveness (Assessment) Website (V.1.6) [3f].

During the 2018-19 implementation of the revised institutional effectiveness process, the Director of OIE and a graduate assistant manually copied and pasted data (outcomes, assessment methods, assessment results, descriptions of program improvements, etc.) from over 250 academic and 70 administrative *Plan* and *Results Reports* to Excel spreadsheet Inventories of Assessment of Outcomes for both Academic Programs (V.1.3) [3f] and Administrative Units (V.1.4) [3f]. This was an extremely cumbersome and time-consuming process. Moreover, *Plan Report* updates required additional, concurrent time-consuming revisions to summary spreadsheets and monitoring reports.

It soon became evident that while the revised assessment process was systematic, meaningful, useful, and more broadly implemented across the institution as compared to the previous process, it was neither efficient nor sustainable due to labor intensity with only a few individuals managing the process. Therefore, it was determined that a better approach for sustaining the campus-wide institutional effectiveness process was to evolve the system to directly involve all assessment leaders with data input and management of their assessment processes. After careful review and discussion regarding various programs available, it was decided that the solution to efficiency and sustainability was a digital assessment platform (Nuventive) and the addition of an Assistant to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to maintain and operate the system.

The Nuventive system license and Assistant to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness were acquired near the end of Spring 2019 with a separate data import service agreement for transferring all 2018-19 Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes to the system. Initial training and development occurred during Fall 2019 [see Nuventive Training Workshop Email (V.2.13) [3d]] and the system was online for assessment leader training sessions at the end of Fall 2019.

### **CRITERION 3**

#### **Closing the Assessment Loop: Improving Pedagogy and Curriculum (3-b)**

Examples of how assessment results are used to improve pedagogy/curriculum are presented in Closing the Loop Across Academic Programs (V.3.1) [3d]. Similar examples of how administrative and support units are closing the assessment cycle “loop” are included in the Administrative Improvement Examples Document (V.3.2) [3d]. The General Education Assessment Report discussed in Standard III, Criterion 5 details continuous improvement strategies from academic programs with SLOs linked to General Education Outcome Areas.

Curriculum improvements take place via the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) (see Standard III, Criterion 1). The rules and procedures governing the operation of the UCC give faculty and members guidance about the adoption and revision of courses and curricula and constitute the general framework for approval and modification of academic offerings.

### **Preparing Students for Successful Careers, Meaningful Lives, and Further Education (3-a, d, & g)**

Cal U prepares student for careers, fulfilling lives, and further education goals through a comprehensive array of activities. As described in Standard III, Criterion 4, faculty collaborate with the Career and Professional Development Center (CPDC) to identify and develop internships, co-ops, and other experiential learning opportunities for students. Similarly, Cal U launched the First Destination visualization using Tableau (V.3.3) [2c], which provides post-baccalaureate career and graduate school information about students six months after their graduation. In Summer 2019, the Cal U CPDC and Internship Center piloted the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Skill Survey (V.3.4), [2c] which solicits evaluation of students' job performance from both employers and the students themselves. Results are summarized in Standard III, Criterion 5.

The revised approach for assessing General Education shifts the emphasis of student learning away from a discrete set of courses toward a more holistic set of General Education Outcome Areas that integrates student knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as well as providing a critical foundation for all degrees and educational programs. It is based on the expectation that a student's general education will continue throughout the college years and not be limited to the first two years of college. The resulting redesign better serves rapidly changing professional programs and provides grounding to help students pursue meaningful lives and careers. The new Outcome Areas address each of the core areas in the Cal U General Education menu that all students experience as part of the General Education Program.

### **Supporting and Sustaining Assessment of Student Achievement (3-a, c, & g)**

In addition to ongoing assessment of student learning, the University tracks and reports student achievement data, including graduation outcomes by program as well as post-graduate academic outcomes, retention, job placement, GPAs, and other key metrics of various constituencies. These data are reported in the Institutional Scorecard (V.3.5) [2c] located at the Office of Institutional Research and Planning website. Each academic department is expected to analyze and utilize the data to develop improvements in both Annual Department Reports (V.3.6) [2c] and PASSHE Periodic Academic Program Reviews (available upon request). Please refer to Standard III, Criteria 1 and 3 for detailed reports on University efforts to track, assess, and improve student success and achievement. As evidenced in the Strategic Enrollment and Recruitment Plan (V.3.7) [2c], the Office of Institutional Research works closely with the Office of Enrollment Management to develop reports that examine admissions criteria and enrollment yields for planning and devising continuous improvement strategies.

### **Improving Key Indicators of Student Success (3-a)**

The University has developed several noteworthy programs in key areas that are specifically designed to improve student success, including: New Student Orientation (please refer to Standard IV, Criterion 1), First-Year Experience courses (Standard IV, Criterion 1), Academic Advising (Standard III, Criterion 1), Learning Communities (Standard IV, Criterion 1), Academic Tutoring and Support Services (Standard IV, Criterion 1), and the Office for Students with Disabilities (Standard III, Criterion 4).

### **Educational Effectiveness of the State System Program Review Process (3-c)**

The State System identifies Active Degree Programs required for periodic program reviews. As of the 2018-19 academic year, 113 Cal U active degree programs were included in the State System's Active Degree Major Inventory (V.3.8) [3c] for periodic program reviews.

As with the Cal U annual academic program assessment process, prior to the Fall of 2018, the Cal U program review process suffered a loss of administrative leadership and sustainability. As a result, the number of program reviews decreased during the four-year period from 2014 to 2018. One element of the annual review was a section that addressed student learning outcomes (Former Program Review



Template (V.3.9) [3c]). It was difficult for programs to obtain appropriate data to support the four State System decision options listed in Table V.1.

**Table V.1: Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education program review decisions**

<b>Program Review Decisions</b>
No changes. Program meeting mission & goals of university and State System as currently offered.
Reorganization or other modification to increase the program's long-term sustainability.
Program should be placed in moratorium.
Collaborative approach with similar programs across multiple universities.

In July 2018, the State System Board of Governors (BOG) approved a revised Policy 1986-04-A: Program Review (V.3.10) [3c]. The State System also approved a related policy, Procedure/Standard Number 2018-35: Review of Academic Programs and Programs in Support of the Student Experience (V.3.11) [3c]. The revised policy and implementation procedures were designed to align periodic program reviews of State System academic programs with the revised Middle States Commission of Higher Education Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation: Thirteenth Edition.

Some significant revisions of the State System periodic program review procedure occurred. Included were an alignment of program review and specialized program accreditation cycles, modified reviews for accredited programs, local university latitude for selecting performance metrics best aligned for achievement of the University's Strategic Plan, and the evaluation of annual program outcomes assessment trend data in the decision-making process.

During the 2018-19 academic year, Cal U's program review process was revised to align with the new State System policy and procedure. The process by which curriculum is revised involves a focus on assessment of SLOs. The template to propose new courses, certificate programs, and degree programs requires submission of measurable SLOs [UCC Course Proposal, page 3 (V.3.12) [3c] and New/Revised Program Application BOG Policy 1985-01-A (V.3.13) [3c]. Additionally, the application requires identification of the assessment that will be used to measure the learning outcomes. (See Standard 3, Criterion 1 for more information).

### **Educational Effectiveness of Academically Related Programs (3-c & d)**

As with academic programs, other campus programs related to academic pursuits are assessed for their effectiveness. For example, the CPDC, which includes the Internship Center, conducts multiple assessments of its effectiveness in preparing Cal U students for the workforce (Post Appointment Survey (V.3.14) [2b]). The First Destination Survey is administered each year and a new data collection method was implemented for the Class of 2017. This new method generated a response rate of 46% (First Destination Survey (V.3.3) [2b]). This response rate is an enormous improvement over 2016's 21%. For 2018, the response rate was 52%. This improvement in response rate is an example of the iterative corrective process of assessment [C5].

In some instances, various non-academic areas have had issues aligning their units to the format of the *Assessment Plan* and *Results Reports* requirements, yet assessment of SLOs still takes place. For example, the Manderino Library staff have attempted to assess the usefulness of LibQUAL in light of current assessment needs. Despite LibQUAL's many attributes, the library assessment team does not see it as an effective assessment strategy for their particular needs. In response, the library assessment staff proposed to investigate alternative surveys; create in-house, more-focused surveys aimed at particular service issues, many of which have been identified through LibQUAL and user groups; and utilize other assessment techniques, such as focus groups and user studies. Library Assessment Recommendations are based on the five goals of the 2015-20 University Strategic Plan (Home-Grown Assessment Process (V.3.15) [3c]).

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), which provides training and materials to faculty and staff to enhance their teaching practices (C3b), maintains data on the amount of use by these personnel, as well as their satisfaction with training and materials (see Standard III, Criterion 2). It increased the participation rate of satisfaction surveying by moving to an electronic form. (TLC Satisfaction Survey (V.3.16) [3c]).

### **Outcomes Assessment of General Education (3-c)**

General Education (Gen Ed) outcomes assessment has been conducted since 2006. The initial assessment model required the selection of a percentage of Gen Ed courses for review each semester. Once selected, course instructors of record were contacted and asked to submit assessment reports at the end of the semester demonstrating how the specific Gen Ed Menu Goals were evaluated and achieved in their classes. The process mirrored the original ASLO model in that there was a Year-End Report completed for courses identified as target courses for a particular year of evaluation. The General Education Committee (GEC) proposed a five-year cycle of evaluation to complete assessment of all Gen Ed across all 14 menus (See Gen Ed Website (V.3.17)).

If menu goals were not met, an action plan was requested in the report to indicate what data-based change would be implemented the next time the course was taught to achieve the goal(s). This process proved unsuccessful due to an extremely low faculty response rate as evidenced by a comment from the 2010 MSCHE re-accreditation team that “[T]he University has a plan for assessing general education, but the actual process is in a nascent state.”

Soon after the re-affirmation visit, each academic department was asked to submit an assessment schedule in which faculty teaching Gen Ed courses would assess at least one menu goal per year over a five-year cycle for their classes. While faculty who submitted reports indicated individual Gen Ed courses were overwhelmingly achieving their menu goals, this approach also had limited participation and did not provide adequate data to evaluate the entire General Education Program (GEP) within the proposed assessment cycle. The model also relied on voluntary participation from instructors. Many reported their unwillingness to participate primarily out of concern that negative course assessment results could be used against them in the faculty evaluation process.

The inability to secure direct Gen Ed assessment results from individual course instructors necessitated the need for a new Gen Ed assessment model focused on the evaluation of artifacts of student work stripped of student and faculty identification.

A Gen Ed Assessment Coordinator, appointed during Spring 2019, was provided with a 25% teaching workload release to work with the faculty assessment liaison, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and other members of the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) to develop a revised 2018 General Education Assessment Plan (GEAP) (V.3.18) with a proposed first-year budget during the 2018-19 academic year.

The Gen Ed Assessment Coordinator and another member of the GEAC participated in a three-day “General Education & Assessment 2019” conference in San Francisco, CA hosted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, to aid in the development of the revised GEAP. The plan and budget were approved by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation.

The GEAP focuses on student growth over the course of the entire undergraduate experience. Rather than assessing individual courses or individual menu goals, this plan compares diverse samples of student coursework from the beginning, middle, and end of the students’ undergraduate education to generate an overview of GEP effectiveness.

During the 2018-19 academic year, a pilot of the new model was conducted. The Assessment Coordinator gathered samples of student work which were, in most cases, culminating assignments from a variety of courses at each level (introductory, intermediate, and advanced). At the advanced level, samples included undergraduate research and submissions for publication or competition. The Assessment Coordinator removed and permanently discarded all identifying information from the student work and assigned a tracking number to each item. Metadata about the level of each item (beginner, intermediate, or advanced) was retained under the tracking number but not displayed on the item itself. At the advanced level, the metadata also included the College (Science and Technology, Liberal Arts, or Education and Human Services) within which the student work was completed. Tracking advanced coursework by College enabled the Assessment Coordinator to compare scores among groups of disciplines that traditionally emphasize elements of one

assessment area (e.g. data analysis in STEM disciplines or communication in humanities disciplines) with those that may place less emphasis on those elements.

At the end of Spring 2019, the Assessment Coordinator convened an assessment retreat where randomized subsets of the coursework samples were distributed to members of the GEAC, who evaluated the work according to the rubric for that year's assessment Outcome Area (I, II, or III). Each assignment was scored on a scale of 1-4 for each item on the rubric. After the retreat, the Assessment Coordinator tabulated the data and presented it to the GEC.

This assessment approach has limitations, most notably the volunteer bias of the artifact pool and the restricted nature of the assignment type (traditional research papers only). For these reasons, the results reflect only what Cal U students are doing when they are assigned to write a traditional research paper by an instructor who is willing to share copies of student work with the GEC.

In addition, this assessment cycle evaluated only student work, and not the assignment prompts to which students were responding. For this reason, the results reflect only what students are and are not doing when writing research papers, regardless of what the students are being asked to do. Low scores may indicate that a student was asked to perform at a higher developmental level but was unable to do so, or low scores may indicate that the student was simply not asked to perform at a higher level. The Gen Ed Assessment Coordinator proposed possible ways to address the troubling issues regarding assessment in future assessment cycles (2018-19 Gen Ed Assessment Pilot Results Report (V.3.19)).

Please refer to Standard III, Criterion 5 for a more comprehensive and detailed description and analysis of Gen Ed assessment at Cal U.

### **Administration/Finance and Educational Support Units (3-a, c & e)**

It is also prudent to assess how units in Administration and Educational Support Units assess their goals as they relate to the student experience at Cal U and the units' ability to govern and administer the institution's mission and vision (C3e). The Administration and Educational Support Assessment Committee (AESAC) meets annually and serves a similar role for these units as the APAC (AESAC Committee Responsibilities (V.2.1) [3c]). As with APAC, AESAC is charged with the periodic evaluation of strategic University outcomes and directly linking University planning and budgeting processes to achievement of strategic goals as required in Middle States RA 10. As a result, the final end-of-cycle *Assessment Results Reports* from academic and administrative and educational support units directly link institutional effectiveness to budgeting and broader institutional planning (Summary of Funding Requests Based on 2018-2019 Outcomes Assessment (V.2.2) [3c]).

The assessment processes occurring in the various student support service areas, which include such services as tutoring, the STEM Lab (V.3.20), Reading Clinic (V.3.21), and Writing Center (V.3.22) [3c]. They provide an excellent example of how the sustained assessment of student outcomes has evolved to better capture meaningful and useful data. In addition to student evaluations of satisfaction with services, the frequency of use is emphasized in data collection as well. The Tutoring Center realized that its data was not reflective of the direct impact of tutoring on student learning. As a result, it has decided to track persistence and graduation rates of the students who use the Tutoring Center Services (V.3.21) [3c].

Additionally, the Reading Clinic conducts pre-post measures with The Nelson Denny Reading Inventory, which identifies areas of intervention and drives the clinical work of the Reading Specialist to assess the direct effectiveness of interventions on students' reading ability (see Reading Clinic Tables (V.3.21) [3c]. The Reading Clinic uses this meaningful data to make changes in the type of reading interventions implemented [C3h].

### **Effectiveness of Student Affairs (3- c & g)**

Student Affairs has instituted a model of program review and assessment obtained from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) which parallels the annual and five-year reviews required of State System academic programs. Historically, assessment of outcomes in

Student Affairs was not consistently pursued, but in 2010 the Associate Dean of Student Affairs became the point person for all assessments conducted in that division. Since that time, each of the 20 units in Student Affairs has shown increased participation in outcomes assessment. The *Assessment Plan Report* utilized by units in Student Affairs requires identification of SLOs as well as program outcomes in alignment with Strategic Plan initiatives: enhance the quality of student life and operate with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices. Additionally, each unit in Student Affairs submits an *Assessment Results Report* that indicates how the unit responds to the assessment results with an eye toward improvement. Units in Student Affairs are in a five-year cycle of program review (See Standard IV, Criterion 6).

### **Effectiveness of Other Units on Campus (3-f & h)**

Units as diverse as Environmental Health and Safety and Purchasing have various types of tracking software that enable them to identify obstacles to achievement of their goals: building safety and expedited requests, respectively. Other units, such as Admissions, which includes Articulation and Transfer, have revised their assessment strategies to better capture their impact on student success. Admissions is using a tracking system (Slate) to better identify the recruitment strategies that bring eligible potential students to Cal U.

Another example of excellence in assessment improvement that has changed in order to be more useful and meaningful is that of University Development and Alumni Relations at Cal U. This unit seeks to engage alumni with the institution as well as fund-raise for it. Assessment practices were focused to improve success in fundraising and meet required quantifiable goals. As depicted in its 2018-19 *Assessment Plan Report* (V.3.23), the Office of Development and Alumni Relations identified “Increase events and event participation through new opportunities to network with students and other alumni” as an outcome. New opportunities were created to allow alumni to support the University through participation in these events. These efforts resulted in the department exceeding its goal of “increasing both alumni sponsored events and event attendance by three percent (3%) each year.” Overall participation rates increased from 2,072 unique participants in 2017-18, to 4,286 unique participants in 2018-19. During the same period, the number of events increased from 35 to 66 in 2018-19.

## **CRITERION 4**

(Does not apply.)

## **CRITERION 5**

### **Summary Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness**

As detailed in Standard III.1, primary evidence of broad participation across academic and non-academic programs is located in periodic Executive Assessment Status Reports - Plans (V.1.1) [3c] and - Results (V.1.2) [3c]. At the conclusion of each academic year, the Deans and Provost also review Annual Department Reports (V.3.6) [3c] submitted by department chairs which include summaries of annual assessment results.

As of December 2019, 75% of academic programs submitted results reports for the 2019-20 assessment cycle with 74% of reports rated with a green status on the Academic Programs Monitoring Tool. Additionally, an Academic Inventory of Assessment of Outcomes (V.1.3) [3c] provides a comprehensive snapshot of expected SLOs, assessment methods used with performance outcomes, assessment results in relation to performance targets, descriptions of program enhancements made, or other actions taken in response to assessment data.

The institution continues to evolve its assessment systems, processes, and reporting tools to enable data-driven decision-making for continuous institutional improvement. In January 2020, Cal U academic assessment leaders were surveyed using assessment rubrics developed by MSCHE. (See MSCHE Rubric for Evaluating - Revision (V.5.1) [3c]). specifically designed for institutional self-improvement. Typically, it is used to illuminate areas of institution-level assessment that may need improvement in order to advance overall institutional effectiveness. The rubric may also reveal how

well an institution is “closing the loop” by questioning how well assessment findings are used in planning and resource allocation.

### **Professional Development Activities**

As detailed in Standard III, Criterion 2, faculty and staff are provided with many opportunities for professional development through the Faculty Professional Development Center (FPDC), the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), the Office of Academic Success, and other units. Through professional development offerings and programs, Cal U employees are able to learn new skills and knowledge, advance existing skills, and stay up to date with changing technology, policy/procedure information, and professional practices. Professional development activities include classroom training, online learning modules, certificate programs, and customized learning initiatives.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides ongoing assistance to employees and has developed and offered a number of assessment-focused professional development programs, tools, and support for evaluating educational effectiveness. Professional development opportunities have included a variety of Assessment Training Presentations/Workshops (V.5.2), (V.5.3) for academic and non-academic programs in a variety of formats including flexible Assessment Workshops and Walk-in Sessions (V.5.4) [3d]. These opportunities focus on enabling faculty and staff to develop meaningful outcomes, assignments, and processes for assessing students’ attainment of learning outcomes and/or other important department-level outcomes. Workshops provide guidance on best practices in assessment with good attendance across both academic and non-academic units of the University (Administration and Finance, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Facilities Management):

- *Use of Rubrics in Outcomes Assessment (V.5.5)* [3d] (Presenter: Holiday Adair, Outcomes Liaison): Participants will be able to construct relevant rubrics that contain appropriate dimensions and behavioral anchors.
- *Use of Surveys in Outcomes Assessment (V.5.6)* [3d] (Presenter: Justin Hackett, APAC Chair): Participants will be able to construct relevant survey items that are valid and reliable.
- *Minimalist Approach to Outcomes Assessment (V.5.7)* [3d] (Presenter: Steve Atkins, Institutional Effectiveness Director) Participants will be able to write a meaningful systematic assessment plan for measuring outcomes in their units.

The Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Team members, including the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, a senior-level faculty Assessment Liaison, a junior-level rising faculty assessment leader, and the Assistant to the Director provide ongoing assistance and feedback to employees on the assessment process through consultations as well as training and just-in-time aid.

The University’s Institutional Effectiveness website provides assessment policies, procedures, resources, timelines, and a university-wide assessment model for strategic, academic, student affairs, and administrative areas in support of the student experience. Resources include step-by-step procedures for completing each component of assessment plans and reports with exemplars from other universities, assessment guidebooks for academic and administrative units, and helpful assessment resources and links (V.1.7). [3d].

### **Other Noteworthy Assessment Activities**

It is worth mentioning several initiatives that have occurred on campus with an eye toward constituting a systematic, useful, meaningful, and cost effective/efficient assessment system:

- The Director for Institutional Effectiveness and the Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation invited faculty and staff to informational sessions to assist with evaluating various assessment management systems (Watermark/Livetext, SPOL, Nuventive/TracDat) and a consensus decision was made to utilize Nuventive.
- There have been significant Enrollment Management initiatives and outcomes. [C3g] (See Standard III, Criterion 8).

- Cal U's annual program review reports require programs to review trends in the data obtained through assessment of student learning. These data are used to support requests for resources (faculty complement, materials, etc.; RA 10).
- The University Assessment Leadership Team developed a new rubric (V.2.5) [3d] aligned with the guidelines for assessment, to evaluate the assessment plans entered in the Nuventive assessment repository (assess student learning outcomes assessment in academic departments). Leaders of the APAC are piloting the rubric with responses to *Plan Report* submissions during the 2019-20 assessment cycle. The APAC members are using the rubric to monitor assessment issues and problems and to provide feedback to assessment leaders.

### **Strengths**

- Cal U has instituted a system of assessment that is sustainable and efficient as well as cost effective. There is a core set of faculty and administration who are assessment-savvy, embrace the value of assessment, and are working with others around the institution to assist in the development of assessment activities and solidify a culture of assessment. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness, in conjunction with the Institutional Effectiveness Team, organizes and sustains the assessment process. The system encourages self-reflection amongst all involved and strives for continuous improvement. Moreover, the assessment process is flexible and works with programs and units to develop a plan that is appropriate, works for them, and provides the needed information for assessing effectiveness. For example, it became clear that an April due date for academic *Results Reports* was untenable for programs that used final assessments in capstone courses, so May due dates were offered as an accommodation, which increased submission rates. Other programs follow accreditation cycles and are offered a Fall due date in line with these cycles.

### **Challenges**

- In order to move forward with confidence about assessment of student learning outcomes, it is imperative to expand the culture of assessment to be a value embraced by everyone in the campus community. Some units are just “not there” yet. Hurdles to overcome are the provision of time to conduct assessment to achieve excellence, increasing participation rates, and communicating the importance of assessment to other stakeholders essential to the process.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- One step toward including everyone in the process of assessment is to provide a common language and process that everyone can embrace. Toward that end, Cal U is attempting to centralize assessment in the decision-making about resource allocation. This will also require an improvement in the communication of assessment results and actions to stakeholders.
- Develop a funding model to ensure continuation of the GEAP process.
- Improve processes to ensure that the General Education/institutional outcomes are more effectively communicated throughout the University and used more widely for institutional planning.
- Task Deans and Chairs with responsibility for supporting and reinforcing implementation and documentation of improvement activities identified in Assessment Action Plans.
- Integrate accountability for assessment into appointment letters and management evaluation forms.
- Develop partnership between APAC, AESAC, USAC, GEAC, and SAAC with TLC in identifying needs and opportunities for professional development to help departments build and institutionalize their assessment practices.

- Ensure that initial professional development orientations for new faculty and adjuncts support best practices in teaching and learning, pedagogical training, and classroom and program-level assessment techniques and processes.
- Expand the Assessment Website to include information pertaining to pedagogy, classroom assessment techniques, classroom management, effective lecturing, course redesign, and Cal U's Learning Management System.
- Develop collaborations among OIE, TLC, FPDC, and College of Education and Human Services to create an online Instructional Resource Guide that provides a concise introduction to the instructional resources available to faculty at Cal U. Develop an online course: "University and College Teaching."
- Develop a program mapping initiative to ensure that all departments have documented course alignment with program outcomes.
- Expand the use of the Nuventive platform to integrate program review, course and program mapping, and specialized accreditation mapping into student learning assessment.

## STANDARD VI

# Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

*The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.*

### WORKING GROUP

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the Self-Study Report documents the importance Cal U places on solid institutional planning and resource allocation aligned to help achieve the University's mission and goals. Through various measures, policies and procedures, financial planning, and analysis, Cal U strives for institutional improvement. By focusing on institutional resources, assessing their utilization and the effectiveness of planning, Cal U's decision-making processes and comprehensive planning measures help affirm the University's financial viability.

This chapter is organized by criteria. Requirements of Affiliation (RAs) 8, 10, and 11 and Institutional Priorities (IPs) 2 (operating with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices) and 4 (creating a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness), per the Self-Study Design Document, will be integrated for each criterion. The format for evidence inventory exhibits is: Standard (Roman).Criterion (Arabic).sequence # within Criterion (Arabic). Example: (VI.1.1). Additionally, exhibit (VI.1.0) is an exhibit of tables and figures within this chapter.

### CRITERION 1

#### Strategic Planning and University Goal Setting

Institutional planning is achieved on several levels that center on the goals and objectives outlined in the University's 2015-20 Strategic Plan: Charting Our Path. A 22-member University Strategic Planning Committee was organized to assist in developing the strategic plan and in approving the mission, vision, and goals that guide institutional planning. The plan focuses on five primary goals that are closely aligned with the University's mission. It intends to ensure that Cal U is committed, above all, to academic excellence and intellectual rigor in the context of personal and institutional integrity, and to operating in a fiscally efficient manner while continuing to serve the Commonwealth, region, and global community.

All major areas of the University require department business plans and/or annual reports that foster the University's mission and goals and help with the continual improvement of each department or College. A sampling of initiatives aligned with the Strategic Plan can be found (VI.1.0 Table VI.1). A Business Plans and Annual Reports (VI.1.1) example for each division is contained within the Evidence Inventory.

Until recently, Annual University Action Plans (VI.1.2) monitored assessment results and chronicled where the University had been, where it was currently, and where it was going. Assessment of these plans was an important aspect of the University's planning efforts, and Cabinet closely monitored action plans for desired outcomes. Specific examples of how budget and planning processes align with strategic goals are described in following sections.

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (State System) has launched a refreshed approach



to goal setting for all 14 of its universities. This new style will replace previous processes, such as the Action Plans. The goal-setting process creates a unified and cohesive foundation that supports informed and transparent decision-making about key budgetary levers, as well as university accountability and performance management systems.

Beginning in the 2019-20 academic year, each university will complete an “Annualized Five-Year Outlook on University Goals.” This report is used to identify university goals that are aligned and integrated with current and new planning processes. These goals must align to existing State System performance metrics and will include university-specific goals. These performance metrics cover three broad areas: (1) Student Success, (2) University Success and Budget, and (3) Academic Program Planning. Projected data will be developed based on five-year historical data trends in each of the areas. Future goals must be (1) specific, (2) measurable, (3) achievable, (4) relevant, and (5) time-bound. University and State System leadership will refine the final template for review and affirmation by the Board of Governors (BOG) during the January 2020 meeting. These goals will be used to support accountability and performance management systems during the State System’s annual budget process with the state Legislature.

## **CRITERION 2**

### **Shared Governance**

As detailed in the University’s Shared Governance Final Report (VI.2.1) from the Task Force on University Shared Governance, Cal U believes the process for making decisions affecting University constituencies must be based upon mutually supportive and respectful dialogue, involving broad and regular two-way communication. During the decision-making process, University authorities have a responsibility to inform potentially affected constituencies about potential changes and provide these units sufficient opportunity for dialogue before decisions are finalized. All such constituencies have the opportunity to influence decision making and retain the right to receive a reply. The shared governance model at Cal U gives “voice” to all constituent groups potentially affected by a decision.

The report on shared governance outlines communication models for decision making and the involvement of all University groups, including faculty, staff leadership, and students. The structured management of these university-wide communications is a critical factor for achieving the benefits inherent with Cal U’s shared governance policy. Several university-wide committees are embedded within organizational tiers to provide senior administrators the opportunity to interact with faculty, staff, and students. This approach to governance at Cal U provides continuous dialogue and gives members across the University opportunities to voice concerns and interact with one another. These committees, in addition to forming the primary governance structure for the University, provide the infrastructure for maintaining communication and guidance for the institution. An overview of the university-wide governance committees is listed online for all faculty and staff to view with their university-issued username and password. Cal U’s governance structure is discussed at length in Standard VII.

In concert with internal relations, the University routinely interacts with elected and appointed officials representing the Borough of California. A key example of these interactions is the monthly Borough/University meeting, led by President Jones and attended by members of her Cabinet. In addition, two or three Borough Council members, the Borough Administrator, and the Mayor (who is a tenure-track faculty member at Cal U) routinely attend. The meeting is used to exchange information and address issues on matters broadly related to “town-gown” relations, as well as to develop plans for collaborations that improve the quality of life for both residents of California Borough and members of the University community.

### **Strategic Enrollment Management**

From January 2016 through February 2017, more than 60 members of the campus community — administrators, faculty, staff, and students — were engaged in developing a Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) (VI.2.2). Organizationally, shared governance and a participatory process is reflected in the spectrum of constituent groups represented by the SEP participants. The process involved extensive

data collection, including 13 categories for review: competition, demand/capacity, diversity, enrollment (undergraduate), external factors, finances, financial aid, graduate students, persistence/graduation, quality (education experience and faculty), selectivity, transfers, and Cal U Strategic Plan.

Working with a consultant from Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL), this group analyzed data, discussed critical issues, developed reports, and made recommendations for optimizing enrollment and strengthening the University's prospects for success. Ultimately, the group developed data-informed plans based on a comprehensive assessment of the University's strengths and weaknesses. Plans were subsequently approved and implemented with resources allocated through the institution's regular budgeting development process. The final high-priority action plans selected for implementation were those deemed most likely to achieve the desired outcomes, including proposals for new, high-impact academic programs.

Following initial implementation of the SEP, action plans were integrated within Cal U's operational plans and the annual assessment planning model. The approach will help ensure that Cal U is committed to academic excellence and intellectual rigor while operating efficiently. Within Cal U's strategic plan, the SEP is found in Goal 2: Operate with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices. Objective 2.2 of the University Strategic Plan is devoted to developing the SEP with this objective in mind. Objective 2.2 of the University Strategic Plan is devoted to developing the SEP with this objective in mind (VI.1.0 Table VI.2).

In concert with these efforts, a strategically aligned financial aid leverage and scholarship awarding program was developed through the RNL Advanced Financial Aid Solutions module. With this model, administrators designed financial aid awarding and packaging strategies to support new-student enrollment and revenue goals. Cal U enhanced its scholarship matrix to be merit-based on high school GPA and SAT/ACT test scores. The partnership also produced smarter use of resources through the deployment of more need-based scholarships to attract academically eligible students. An institutional need award is calculated based upon an individual's remaining financial need. Fall 2017 was the first incoming class recruited while implementing these strategies.

The RNL team annually presents the results for the upcoming Fall semester to the University President and Cabinet while simultaneously defining and making any adjustments for the next fall recruiting cycle. In addition to this, annual two-day site visits to the University were supplemented to evaluate the impact of the new scholarship and awarding matrix on achieving enrollment goals (quantity and academic quality of students). These evaluative visits resulted in modifications to leveraging strategies for the upcoming year.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

Cal U maintains a comprehensive annual assessment process that allows data-driven decisions to effect continuous improvement at the program and administrative-unit level. Beginning each fall semester, academic and non-academic programs develop annual assessment plans. The annual *Assessment Plan Report* includes the program's outcomes, expected criteria for success, and methods of gathering data. Annual assessment plans are submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment in October and data collection is carried on throughout the academic year. Through this process, each office operates with clearly stated outcomes and transparent assessment measures.

Near the end of the assessment cycle, all departments (academic and non-academic) analyze data, discuss results, determine their meaning, and create action plans based on those meanings. Units enter completed assessment results into Nuventive. The *Assessment Results Report* highlights the data, the results of analyses, and an action plan to "close the loop" by addressing weaknesses or areas where outcomes were not met. Assessment results and improvement plans are reviewed and managed by assessment leaders, department chairs, Deans, and/or Directors and reported in annual unit plans, as well as in program assessment reports. Assessment-based budget requests designed to improve student success are tied to the University planning and budgeting process for the next

academic year. Further details on the Annual Assessment process are provided in Chapter V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

### **Foundation for California University**

The Foundation for California University (VI.2f.1), incorporated in 1986, supports the mission and goals of the University and its students. As an affiliated yet independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization exempt from federal income taxes under the Internal Revenue Code, the foundation cultivates and receives funds to hold, administer, invest and disburse. The Foundation Endowment Fund (the "Endowment") has a current market value of over \$34 million dollars. The Endowment consists of 411 individual donor funds. These funds are endowed gifts which provide perpetual financial support for scholarships, awards, faculty chairs, and other enhancement programs and services. An endowed gift is intended to provide the University with a permanent source of funding by investing the principal amount of the gift and making available a portion of the income it generates. The amount of endowment "income" available for spending is determined by the Foundation Board of Directors in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

### **Student Association, Incorporated**

The Student Association, Inc. (SAI) is a 501c3 nonprofit owned by the students at Cal U. The purposes of SAI are to benefit the University and its students, make financial contributions or similar benefits to the University supported by the President and Council of Trustees of the University, and support the mission and goals of the University as delineated in the California University of Pennsylvania Strategic Plan.

All regularly enrolled students of California University of PA, carrying 12 or more semester hours of credit and who have paid all established SAI fees are members of the Corporation. The SAI Board of Directors consists of 13 regular members (five alumni, one full-time fee paying graduate student, seven undergraduate students who also serve in Student Congress, and three nonvoting ex-officio members: VP for Student Affairs/designated University Liaison, Associate VP for Student Affairs, and the SAI Chief financial Officer).

SAI employs 11 full-time staff members who operate the business of SAI, along with directing or assisting in the coordination of student media services, fraternity and sorority life, athletic facilities, and the student center. SAI currently allocates \$1,100,000 to over 80 student clubs and organizations, and provides an allocation to intercollegiate athletics. The diverse student clubs and organizations consist of academic clubs, faith-based organizations, multicultural groups, political clubs, media, performing arts, recreational, volunteer and service, sports clubs, and special interest groups. SAI also provides annual \$1,000 scholarships for student leaders representing the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes.

## **CRITERION 3**

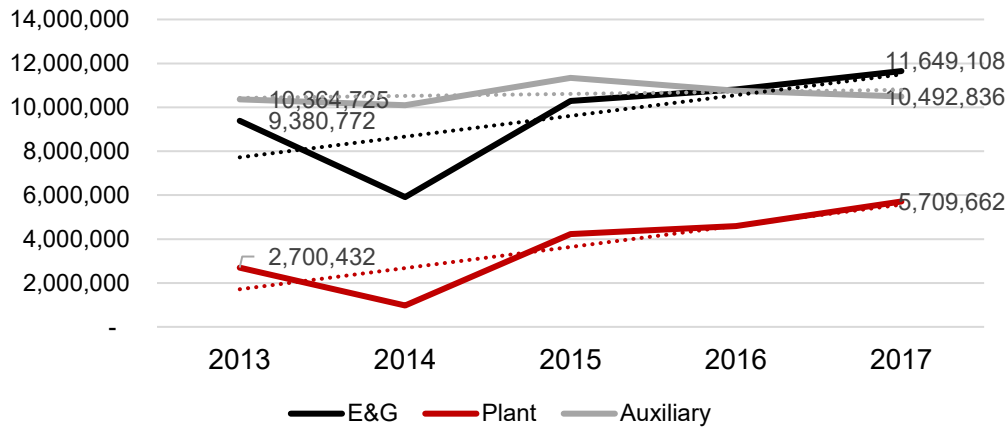
### **Financial Challenges and Opportunities**

The University continues to address legacy-based financial challenges and is committed to the efficient and effective utilization of resources, which is driven by strategic planning and linked to the assessment of the University's goals and objectives. The University strives to improve its business processes and financial circumstances to ensure that expenditures are aligned with its core mission of educating students. Over the past several years, and in addition to personnel cost savings, Cal U has reduced its operational expenditures by over \$7 million. As evidenced in the Financial Risk Assessment, Cal U's E&G expenditures per FTE student is lower than the State System average [see (VI.1.0 Figure VI.1)].

The Financial Risk Assessment Tool is used to examine the financial strength of the University based on three key components: market demand, operating efficiency, and financial performance. The assessment is provided through the State System and is modeled after a typical analysis used in an external review. Cal U has used this report to enhance and strengthen all facets of enrollment management initiatives, as well as its fiscal management. Stemming from this, stronger and more

strategic financial management strategies have been implemented, as demonstrated by ending the fiscal year with a surplus for four of the past five fiscal years. As a result, Cal U's unrestricted net assets (University reserves) are at the highest levels in University history (see Figure VI.2).

**Figure VI.2: Unrestricted net assets**



Nonetheless, Cal U is not insulated from the national challenges facing most institutions of higher education. The University's operating margin has been declining over the last three years as it struggles to balance revenue with expenses. For fiscal year 2019-20, the University is facing three main challenges: 1) The University's annualized full-time equivalency (FTE) enrollment is projected to decrease approximately 7%; 2) It is expected that the University's base appropriations (base amount and performance funding) from the State System will remain the same as in the 2018-19 fiscal year; and 3) There will be no general tuition increase for in-state students.

To further address financial challenges and budget shortfalls in 2019-20, President Jones and her Cabinet identified several measures that will be taken in an effort to manage finances, grow reserves, and contain financial risk: vacant positions will remain unfilled to the extent possible; any vacancy that must be filled will be examined to determine if existing personnel can assume the vacated duties, and all adjunct faculty hires will be analyzed and reduced where viable; discretionary WKE assignments and faculty overload will be reduced; all University travel will be significantly curtailed; academic programs will be evaluated for academic and financial viability; and a new campus-wide printing solution has been launched. In addition, cost-saving measures are regularly explored, and novel programs are being developed to attract new students. Many programs already have been approved and several are in development or awaiting final approval.

In 2017, the State System announced a System Redesign (VI.3.1) after an extensive external review of all operations. The redesign boosts many opportunities, not only for Cal U but also for the entire System. Actions taken thus far in the phased-approach model will alleviate certain burdens stemming from longstanding policies and offer universities more autonomy and speediness in approving new academic programs. This gives universities more control in responding to student needs and the changing occupational landscape. An overhaul of the entire budgeting process is underway with the goal of streamlining processes and reviewing formulas used for state appropriation and performance funding. Another key opportunity in development is a strategic investment fund, which is similar in design to the University's new initiative model. These efforts, coupled with the phases outlined in the Campus Master Plan, will help to shape Cal U's financial picture. This is not to convey an immediate change – these planning efforts are strategic in nature and will be realized over the course of time.

The University's two pricing flexibility pilot programs continue to prove advantageous. In 2014, Cal U submitted its first pilot proposal to the State System Board of Governors (BOG) after identifying a growing need to assist active-duty military and veteran students; assessment of competitors revealed a need to lower and freeze the undergraduate and graduate tuition rates. This two-year pilot program offered undergraduate tuition at the current Military Tuition Assistance (TA) reimbursement rate and graduate tuition at fixed per-credit amounts for all active-duty military and their dependents/spouses.

The pilot significantly exceeded enrollment and financial revenue goals with an increase in the number of military students each year. Because of its success, the University expanded eligibility in 2016 to include military veterans and their eligible dependents. This program received unanimous support from the BOG for continuation beyond the pilot period. Enrollment over the five-year period highlights the program's success: It began with 303 students during the baseline year, and by the fifth year reached 1,058.

The University went on to submit a second pilot to the BOG in 2015. This pilot allowed the Council of Trustees (COT) to eliminate the full-time cap for the Undergraduate Academic Support Fee and apply the per-credit charge to all credits attempted, resulting in approximately \$900,000 in additional revenue annually. The Academic Support Fee helps to cover general instructional operations, academic facility needs, instructional equipment, required course/University tests and examinations, laboratory supplies, course-required field trips, student teaching, clinical experiences, and related activities. These costs tend to be variable in nature and increase directly with student enrollment. Charging the Academic Support Fee on a per-credit basis better aligns the revenue and the variable costs associated with the fee in order to provide appropriate support at the instructional level.

### University Budget

The University operates with a budget of approximately \$150 million budget among three categories: Educational and General (E&G), Auxiliary, and Restricted/Plant (Table VI.3). The E&G category, which totals nearly \$120 million, consists of all activities and resources that support the University's educational mission, including unrestricted functions of instruction, research, public service, academic support, institutional support, scholarship and fellowship, and operations and maintenance of plant activities. The Auxiliary enterprise exists to furnish goods or services to students, faculty, or staff; it charges users a fee intended to help cover these costs. The operation must be designed to be self-supporting, and the application of the definition must be consistent from year to year. Restricted/plant funds are set aside for various facility and capital improvement projects.

**Table VI.3: Total University budget**

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
E&G	115,645,446	119,145,907	119,979,963
Auxiliary	18,578,343	18,091,056	17,694,862
Restricted/Plant	18,670,594	19,724,605	19,768,739
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$152,894,383</b>	<b>\$156,961,568</b>	<b>\$157,443,564</b>

The University's main operating budget, E&G, is constructed on three major sources of revenue: tuition, fees, and state appropriation and performance funding. These revenues are dependent on undergraduate and graduate enrollment, tuition and fee rates, and the state appropriation calculation. The percentage E&G revenues and expenses by category are shown in (VI.1.0 Figure VI.3) and (VI.1.0 Figure VI.4).

Revenues and expenses are projected during the budget development process, which occurs on a fiscal year basis. As the new fiscal year approaches, and more information is gathered (e.g., enrollment projections, tuition and fee rates, state appropriation calculations, etc.), budgets are refined continuously to better reflect the more precise data of revenue streams and future expenses. This budget development process includes several steps throughout the fiscal year so that each new fiscal year starts with a base budget.

### Budget Timeline

In recent years, Cal U's budgeting and forecasting processes, outlined in the Budget Timeline (VI.3.2), have been refined to have more user involvement and input regarding departmental budget allocations, in addition to the needs outlined through departmental business plans and annual reports that align with the Strategic Plan. By monitoring the expenditures of each campus unit to help control costs and plan for discretionary and mandatory funding needs, the Budget Office begins its planning

well in advance of the fiscal year-end (July 1 – June 30).

The University provides funding for many activities that provide Educational Enrichment Opportunities (VI.3.3) for students, such as the Madagascar Field School, and professional development for faculty through the Faculty Professional Development Center. Engagement in the local community is encouraged through events such as the Big Event and Pike Run Youth Fishing Festival, coordinated by the Office of Volunteer Programs and Service Learning and the Student Government Association, and in partnership with the California Recreation Authority, the Army Corp of Engineers, and the Department of Environmental Protection.

At the start of the fiscal year, base budgets are loaded into the University's financial accounting system. In concert with this, year-end activities are orchestrated and financial statements, through the FINRPT, are submitted to the State System. Once the FINRPT is submitted, the University's budget report (BUDRPT) can be finalized and submitted to the State System. The BUDRPT is a budgeting tool that encompasses all University operations (E&G, Auxiliary, and Plant) for the current fiscal year and the next two fiscal years; the report includes enrollment data, FTEs, and positional management data, as well as financial/budget data for all three operational areas of the University.

At its fall COT meeting, Trustees are presented the E&G budget for review and approval. In addition, at each quarterly meeting, E&G budget performance updates are provided, and special budget workshops are held at the request of Trustees. Midway through the fiscal year, a detailed analysis of expenses and revenue trends is completed to determine if any course correction is needed regarding budget assumptions. These corrections are used in completing the interim BUDRPT, a mid-year snapshot of the E&G budget as it compares to the original BUDRPT previously submitted to the State System.

### **Budget Planning**

The University primarily relies upon a zero-based budgeting approach to allocate resources across campus departments on an annual basis. Budget development has evolved into a more inclusive process, encouraging broader campus participation. Once input is received from each department and reviewed by the respective Vice President, the information is shared with the Budget and Planning Committee and is then reviewed and approved by Cabinet. In addition to the departmental budgets, personnel expense projections are made with new salary and benefit rate assumptions provided by the State System. These rate assumptions include any contractual changes that might, or are planned to, occur within the next fiscal year. All personnel expenditure budgets are centralized and managed by the Budget Office and are not included in departments' operational budgets.

Before base budgets are built, the University projects revenues by conducting an analysis of the three main sources of revenue. The greatest factor is tuition and fee revenue, which is driven by various enrollment assumptions gathered from Institutional Research data, pre-registration predictive analysis, and daily new student enrollment reports. Detailed tracking of enrollment is critical in determining the amount of tuition revenue that can be brought in for the next budget cycle. The enrollment data becomes official once the census date is reached. Although enrollment might be official, enrollment projections are revised continuously to ensure budgets are built accurately.

Enrollment is a key piece in revenue generation; another is tuition and fee rates. These rates are set by the State System BOG. The University uses the most current rates, plus its own tuition and fee pricing models (e.g., in-state vs. out-of-state tuition pricing) to estimate the tuition dollars the University expects to receive. The University utilizes a process in which fees collected are then allocated and used for specific projects. The technology fee is recognized as revenue that is then allocated based on the University's Strategic Plan for the use of these fees. The creation of a Tech Fee Committee (VI.3.4) occurred in Fall 2018 to oversee proposals to support technology projects aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Over fiscal year 2017-18, eight projects were completed, totaling \$234,219.53. For fiscal year 2018-19, there were six proposals. The total request for projects was \$234,820, while the budget available was \$175,000. The committee was able to reassign a proposal as a tech fee refresh and worked with

the applicant to reduce another request. In all, five of the six submitted proposals were supported. The University also collects a lab fee from students who register in courses that have a lab associated with them. These lab fees are used in coordination with the University's Strategic Plan to maintain and improve labs and equipment across campus.

The third and final revenue source is the state appropriation, which includes performance funding. The state appropriation is distributed to the State System universities via an allocation formula that considers enrollment, size of physical plant, and other factors. Performance funding is a portion of the state appropriation, but it is based on the University's achievements on several performance indicators. Once the revenue projections are completed, the budget development process takes place. The budget development process determines the allocation of budget dollars for departmental budgets, including operating and personnel expenses. Each year there are contractual salary increases and rising benefit costs that have a significant impact on the fiscal year budget.

Before departmental budget allocations are finalized, University administrators review annual and periodic (program review) assessment reports. Academic departments submit a self-reflection in annual reports, which may describe student success outcomes for the department, such as first-year retention, persistence, graduation rates, faculty resources, placement rates, presentations or publications by students and/or faculty, or improvements identified through program assessment. These reports are analyzed to ensure budgets are allocated with a strategic and unit assessment-focused approach.

The University utilizes the Functional Cost Tool, an instructional cost tool designed by the State System's SAP Business Intelligence Team, to determine net revenue of courses, programs, and departmental areas on campus, and in evaluating academic program viability. The Functional Cost Tool is also used to prepare analysis on instructional costs vs non-instructional costs [example is demonstrated in (VI.1.0 Figure VI.5)], and to evaluate the frequency of course section offerings to support administrators in determining the best use of resources. These tools, program assessment and the Functional Cost Tool, are used by the Budget Office to examine overall feasibility and viability of programs and to finalize budget resource allocations.

### **Budget Process Enhancements**

The University's Budget and Planning Committee, a cross-functional shared governance group of administrators, faculty, staff, and students, and beginning in Winter 2019 has added to their undertaking the recommendation of new initiatives for funding support based on recommendations from the University Strategic Assessment Committee (USAC). Such initiatives are supported by a pool of surplus funds from the prior fiscal year. The process works in concert with year-end planning and budgeting. A multi-level process was developed to review and prioritize funding requests clearly linked to institutional and unit outcomes.

At the beginning of the academic year, assessment leaders submit academic program and administrative/education support unit outcomes designed to measure student success and effectiveness of administrative services in support of the student experience through an annual assessment plan. These initial Assessment Plan Reports are reviewed and feedback is provided through an Academic Program Assessment Committee (APAC), a Student Affairs Assessment Committee (SAAC), or an Administrative and Educational Support Assessment Committee (AESAC). Toward academic year-end, final Assessment Results Reports indicating the extent to which outcomes were achieved are reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and reports requesting additional funding are forwarded to College deans and directors, and to USAC for review and initial funding prioritization. Once all requests are gathered, the University's Budget and Planning Committee meets to review these operational requests and rank new initiatives for potential funding support. Their ranking is then presented to Cabinet for final consideration and authorization.

## CRITERION 4

### Fiscal and Human Resources

All members of the President's Cabinet and their management teams work to ensure sufficient resources are utilized to support the mission and goals of the University, and they closely monitor any adjustment to Cal U's workforce. Each non-instructional position request, whether new or replacement, is made by the respective department head through a Non-Instructional Position Justification Form (VI.4.1). The process is outlined through a workflow, which is then reviewed by Cabinet. The comprehensive form is accompanied with a step-by-step Workflow of Position Justification Form (VI.4.2) that outlines the approval process. An analysis of the number of employees per department is done and compared to peer universities to ensure departments are adequately staffed.

In the most recent annual performance indicators report, Cal U produced an employee-to-student ratio that exceeded the System average, illustrated in (VI.1.0 Figure VI.6) and (VI.1.0 Figure VI.7). Similarly, Cal U's faculty has produced high instructional productivity in the State System, as measured by the Student FTE/Faculty FTE. This claim is verified by IPEDS, State System institutional research, and the Snyder Report. For at least the last 10 years, Cal U has received significant amounts of performance funding for its faculty productivity and, more recently, for its overall employee efficiency. Cal U's average instructional faculty salary cost per full-time equivalent undergraduate student, as reported in the 2017-18 Joint State Government Commission Report (VI.4.3), was \$3,675. Similarly, at the graduate level, faculty cost per FTE student was \$4,180, the second lowest in the State System.

Based on the financial pressures facing the University, opportunities to achieve personnel cost savings were engaged. Actions helping to shrink the gap between expenses and revenues include three staff furloughs, outsourcing in the Facilities Management area and in the campus grounds functions, as well as outsourcing of the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. Since 2011, the time when the University began to experience decreasing enrollment, all full-time employee groups have shrunk in total FTE. The reduction in workforce, demonstrated in (VI.1.0 Table VI.4), is consistent with the trend of the student body population, illustrated in (VI.1.0 Figure VI.8).

### Information Technology Resources

In addition to the physical campus, Cal U's technology infrastructure is a foremost priority. The University Technology Services Strategic Plan (VI.4.4) aligns with the goals set forth in Cal U's Strategic Plan, with emphasis on improving IT security and infrastructure, standardization and virtualization of technology, improving services and facilities, and reducing costs. This plan is executed as funding is available to ensure the continued viability of technology resources.

Disaster recovery is a critical part of risk management and planning surrounding the University's technical infrastructure; because of this, efforts were taken to secure the University's data. The primary outcome is that data back-up now is done at an offsite location, which greatly reduces the risk of data loss in case of a catastrophic event.

## CRITERION 5

The decision-making hierarchy is described in California University's Organizational Chart (VI.5.1). The organizational chart, in combination with position descriptions, ensures that the various University decision makers understand their role and where they fit into the overall decision-making hierarchy. The chart also clearly indicates to whom each decision maker is accountable in the chain of command.

To ensure processes are well defined and organized, the University has developed and maintains descriptions for many of the crucial decision-making processes. For example, the Accounting Manual (VI.5.2) not only describes the roles and duties of those involved in the accounting function, but also provides a detailed description of the accounting processes and procedures that are crucial to the University's strategic goal of operating with fiscal soundness. The Procurement of Goods Policy



(VI.5.3) outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the purchasing of goods, services, supplies, and construction. This policy aligns with the University's strategic goal by managing costs to promote a fiscally sound procurement process.

The Staff Recruitment Guide (VI.5.4) guides hiring managers and search committees in the recruitment and selection procedures for non-instructional employees. The University Travel Policy (VI.5.5) outlines appropriate procedures to adhere to when traveling on official University business. The Budget Reporting and Review Policy (VI.5.6) contains processes and procedures the University follows when allocating funds for operation and capital procurement. Grants Accounting Policy and Procedures (VI.5.7) details existing operational controls at the University. The 2018-19 Undergraduate Enrollment and Recruitment Plan (VI.5.8) provides a framework for Cal U to confront institutional and environmental challenges with emphasis on one key goal: enrollment stability and growth.

## CRITERION 6

### Campus Master Plan

Cal U's Strategic Plan outlines general principles that allow the University not only to advance its mission, but also to respond as opportunities and challenges arise. In 2018, the University initiated a Campus Master Planning process with Burchart Horn Architects (BHA) to create an updated Campus Master Plan (VI.6.1).

To kick off planning efforts, the University restored the Campus Master Plan charter to assist in the management, development, and improvement of all campus facilities that support the University's mission and educational goals. The Campus Master Planning Board is tasked with looking at campus development 20 years into the future. The board consists of administrators, staff, and faculty who develop plans and programs to protect and enhance the environment, pursue sustainability wherever possible within all construction-related activities, and address effective utilization and appropriate use of all facilities.

The Campus Master Plan is guided by the goals of the University and the challenges it faces. The overall goals and objectives are to: 1) reduce the overall facility operational expenditures by shrinking the campus footprint; 2) convert less energy-efficient facilities from the steam plant to stand-alone or pod gas heating systems; 3) more effectively utilize instructional and departmental space based on programmatic and student demand data; and 4) prepare a plan that strategically determines deferred maintenance needs into demolition, renovation, and new construction phases.

Within the Campus Master Plan, a space analysis was an important component in determining available resources when balancing assignable square footage with current and projected enrollments. Space needs by category for current, calculated, current adjusted, as well as categories with specific surpluses are summarized in (VI.1.0 Figure VI.9). Detailed findings and related information are outlined in the full report, but includes ideas such as: demolishing Azorsky, Gallagher, Keystone, and portions of Morgan, as well as recapturing Residence Hall B for reimagined instructional and non-instructional space.

Through the Master Planning process, the team developed a proposed scheme for future space allocation. After analysis of University data, it was determined that approximately 111,903 ASF of space would be slated for demolition. This recommendation takes into account current and future needs, as well as building condition and historical significance, among other things.

Creation of the Campus Master Plan offers the opportunity to look back at the accomplishments of the University, as well as to plan for the needs and challenges that confront all institutions of higher education in western Pennsylvania, and those confronting Cal U in particular. The plan provides an analysis of physical conditions, as well as space programming analyses, to help lead the University into the coming years. The plan has been designed to be a "living document" that can be continually revisited, allowing the University to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of higher education.

## Facilities Management and University Infrastructure

Cal U has implemented a comprehensive strategy to monitor its facilities and infrastructure to address needs based on a priority system revolving around the University's Strategic Plan and Campus Master Plan. Through various implements, the University's plan for its facilities incorporates factors such as sustainability, maintenance, and forecasting.

With its nationally recognized geothermally heated and cooled residence halls and a commitment to sustainable best practices, Cal U is a leader in energy efficiency within the State System. For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, Cal U's unit energy cost of \$0.93 per square foot remained stable compared to the previous year and was one of the best in energy consumption among the State System universities, according to the 2018 Utility Usage Report (VI.6.2). Cal U led the State System with the lowest central plant fuel costs. This has been the trend since 2012-2013.

The average building typically requires renovation every 35 years. Cal U has successfully worked within its previous master plan to prioritize construction and renovations to those buildings most in need, resulting in a campus with more buildings under 25 years of age than its peers. The comprehensive Annual Inspection of Facilities report identifies where repairs and/or replacement of facilities and infrastructure are needed, along with cost estimates. The report tracks the condition of the campus facilities and the completion of assigned repairs or replacements.

In 2016 the University purchased the six on-campus residence halls from the Student Association Inc., an affiliated entity of the University. Acquiring the on-campus housing with State System bonds, which carry a low interest rate, provided several advantages, such as greater flexibility in setting prices and room configurations, a reduction in annual debt service payments, and access to funds held to refinance the hedge-funded financing component.

The University continues to focus investment on increasing life-cycle systems on campus. Facilities are prioritized based on projected enrollment, as well as facility age and needs. Facility operations are extremely efficient and have consistently exceeded peers in overall inspection and benchmarks, as described in the independent Sightlines Report (VI.6.3). Overall customer satisfaction with facility-related requests continues to improve. Maintenance staff is covering more technically complex, younger spaces than our peers, and our custodial staff is covering more space and working in larger buildings than our peers. Cal U must continue to increase its revenue stream in order to maintain its facilities. The University is self-identifying underutilized spaces and evaluating how they can best be used.

The Board of Governors approves projects through a rolling, five-year Capital Spending Plan (VI.6.4). To prioritize projects in the spending plan, the BOG evaluates prior capital funding support given to the University; relative ranking among the State System universities from previous years; academic benefit; space, ADA, safety and code compliance deficiencies; new revenue or matching fund potential; cost-savings potential; and impact on the deferred maintenance backlog at the University. Project funding requested through the Capital Spending Plan includes a new Science Complex and the renovation and expansion of Coover Hall. The University also funds Internal Capital Projects (VI.6.5) that advance its mission and goals. Funding support for these projects is provided through the E&G budget, Key93 capital funds, or from plant repair and replacement funds. In the past three years, Cal U has invested more than \$4 million in internal capital projects, including the Rutledge Institute for Early Childhood Education, phased upgrades to Lilley Softball Field, and a new molecular biology lab for students.

Cal U Facilities Management also invests in overall curb appeal. According to the Sightlines report, the University exceeds not only its State System peers, but other regionally comparable universities as well. Construction of new facilities, driven by the Capital Spending Plan, are systematically evaluated to link with the University's strategic direction. Academic excellence and student life are always considered. New construction and major renovation projects use sustainable building materials and energy-efficient equipment and systems.

While investing in existing campus infrastructure and facilities, a steering committee commissioned

CannonDesign to analyze programmatic need and facility design response through a Feasibility Study Report (VI.6.6) for the creation of a new Science Complex that would position Cal U among the leading state universities in teaching science and technology. Over the course of the study, CannonDesign engaged with University leadership, faculty, students, and staff. Its report summarizes the team's findings and recommendations for a new science building that reflects the spirit of engagement, team-based learning and discovery, and the significance of STEM fields in contemporary society. The University currently has instructional locations at Clarion University of Pennsylvania and at Washington Hospital, in Washington, PA.

## CRITERION 7

### Audited Financial Statements

An annual independent audit (VI.7.1) of the University's finances and processes is conducted by an external audit firm for each fiscal year. The firm is selected through a request for proposal (RFP) process controlled by the State System. Once the bid is accepted, the external firm assigns the University a team of auditors. Most recently, CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) has been Cal U's independent audit firm.

The external auditors meet with University leadership, including the University President, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Associate Vice President for Finance. The Comptroller and Accounting staff also work closely with the auditors to ensure the proper documents and records are available for review. During the audit process, the audit firm presents a management letter with audit findings to University leadership. The letter is reviewed by University leadership; if needed, a corrective action plan is developed to directly mitigate any deficiency. Follow-through on the corrective action plan is overseen by University leadership, as well as the stakeholders responsible for the area of concern. Once the audit team completes its collection and inspection of records, the audited financial statements are prepared and presented to University leadership and its Trustees.

## CRITERION 8

### State System Performance Funding

Between 2011 and 2016, the State System assessed and measured the performance of each University by examining 10 indicators. Each University received performance-based funds linked to its success on each of the performance indicators. In 2016-17, slight modifications were started with a transitional plan fully implemented in 2017-18 that reduced the award performance from 10 to five equally weighted measures. These new standards would be measured in 2017-18 and 2018-19 and funds would be awarded in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Cal U's self-designed indicator was increasing the number of first-year students in learning communities; the long-standing System-wide quantitative measures were: 1) student diversity (percentage of total fall students who are non-majority); 2) second-year retention; 3) degrees conferred per 100 FTE; and, 4) closing the first-time freshmen achievement gaps for Pell Grant recipients.

During the first review period of 2017-18, California performed exceedingly well by successfully meeting all five performance indicators [see (VI.1.0 Table VI.5)] which resulted in \$3.35 million being awarded from the nearly \$39 million in total dollars awarded to Universities in 2018-19. California University was only one of five state system universities who successfully met five indicators in 2017-18.

## CRITERION 9

### Continuous Improvement

At Cal U, the Strategic Plan identifies five broad goals and ensuing objectives that are the driving force for continuous improvement related to planning, resource allocation, and continued institutional improvement. As discussed throughout this section, Cal U has developed systematic processes aimed at providing meaningful assessment data that can be used for institutional improvement.

To enhance institutional effectiveness, Cal U strives to create transparent, well-defined decision-making processes that are governed by administrators, faculty, and staff working within a clearly delineated chain of command. Such efforts are aligned with and driven by the University's strategic goals to enhance academic excellence and the student experience while operating with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices.

The University has established a comprehensive, integrated, and institution-wide assessment planning process that informs University planning. Within administrative divisions, the assessment process incorporates assessment of strategic objectives and division-specific outcomes, both directly tied to the Strategic Plan. This process for assessment is used by all divisions. Nuventive, a recently acquired digital management system, eases the assessment process and serves as a repository for data and information about the priorities and goals of divisions across campus. Nuventive will improve the integration of assessment and planning. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness leads these assessment efforts and helps guide the integration of the results with University planning. The office works closely with academic, administrative, and student service divisions to generate and track the data required to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of every academic and non-academic unit on campus.

## **CONCLUSION**

Throughout this Standard, it has been demonstrated that Cal U has practices in place to meet the institutional goals set forth in the Strategic Plan, comprehensive budget and planning measures, and a Campus Master Plan. Updating the Campus Master Plan offered the opportunity to look back at the University's growth from various perspectives: student enrollment, academic programming, and facilities. This process also allowed Cal U to look into the future and plan for its facility and operational needs. Financial challenges will continue to be areas of concern for many institutions, and Cal U is no exception. As discussed, Cal U is taking strategic measures to ensure its financial health and advancement. In addition to its Master Plan, enhanced enrollment efforts are underway.

Cal U has been proactive in identifying and implementing strategies to strengthen its financial sustainability. Due to success in this area, the Vice President for Administration and Finance is co-leading the work being done by the State System-wide Investment Committee. While those efforts have been locally managed and self-guided, the new financial sustainability framework will provide broader system-wide support, as well as more accountability.

### **Strengths**

- Cal U has been aggressive over the past few years in reducing expenses to combat the ongoing decline in tuition revenue. Standard VI reviews in detail the sizeable reductions incurred in employee complements in all facets of the institution's service delivery and support units.
- Cal U is implementing a new Strategic Enrollment Plan aimed at stabilizing and growing enrollment by 2025. To build upon the work done by RNL in developing a SEP, the Office of Enrollment Management was created with a goal of better coordinating Cal U's strategic enrollment and student success efforts.
- A new Customer Relationship Management system, Slate, was launched in 2019 to provide faster, better, and more consistent customer services for prospective students. Slate encompasses not only the CRM, but also outreach, travel management, online applications, and online reading/evaluation.

### **Challenges**

- Revenue loss due to declining enrollments and large University capital debt is a continuing challenge for financial sustainability of the University.
- Communication transparency with all campus stakeholders continues to be an issue.

### **Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation**

- Improve documentation of the feedback loop for processes, assess these changes and, in the spirit of continuous improvement, systematically update these processes. This is important to ensure transparency in the decision-making processes and the systematic changes occurring through the State System Redesign.
- Transparency of resources and planning in communicating topics of significance to Cal U's faculty and staff must be improved.
- The Functional Cost Tool should be used to analyze departmental return-on-investment and to evaluate program viability to aid in program prioritization.
- Leverage the university-wide Tuition Pricing Task Force to develop new pricing models for students to assist with recruiting efforts.

## STANDARD VII

# Governance, Leadership and Administration

*The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. The institution has education as its primary purpose and operates in an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The basic structure of the University's governance is explicitly detailed in Standard VII in this section. This final chapter of the self-study report documents the ways in which Cal U delineates the University's operational and administrative structure. This chapter will be organized by the five Standard VII Criteria for Accreditation, Requirements of Affiliation (RAs) 12 (Governance Structure) and 13 (Governance Board Conflicts of Interest), and three Institutional Priorities (IPs) (2 – operating with sound and efficient governance practices; 3 – achieving optimal enrollment; 4 – a comprehensive system of institutional effectiveness) identified in the University's May 2018 Self-Study Design Report. The format for evidence inventory exhibits is: Standard (Roman).Criterion (Arabic).sequence # within Criterion (Arabic). Example: (VII.1.1).

California University of Pennsylvania's organizational chart clearly delineates the University's operational and administrative structure. Cal U employs administrative and academic officers with the experience and expertise needed to lead the institution in achieving its stated mission and goals. The governance of Cal U is vested in a Council of Trustees (COT) and Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education's Board of Governors (BOG). As part of the checks and balances of University governance, Cal U's COT is accountable to the BOG and delegates authority to the University President as Chief Executive Officer for University operations. The report concludes with a summary of strengths and challenges, as well as opportunities for ongoing institutional improvement and innovation.

### CRITERION 1

#### Transparent Governance Structure

A new shared governance plan, in pages 5-8 of the 2015 Periodic Review Report (VII.1.1), was approved by the California University of Pennsylvania COT at its June 2015 meeting and was implemented in Fall 2015. The governance plan, a "hub-and-spoke" system, has at its hub the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and mandated Meet and Discuss meetings between faculty and administration. Meet and Discuss occurs monthly and is chaired by the local APSCUF President and the Provost. Student Government Association (SGA) representatives are invited. Discussions about contract implementation and shared governance items are reflected in the agenda.

Other important groups ("spokes") in the shared governance system include the College Councils, chaired by each College Dean and attended by the department chairs from each academic department of the respective College; the Staff Leadership Council, composed of the Provost, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Vice President for Student Affairs, as well as the local union presidents (SCUPA, SPFPA, OPEIU, AFSCME, and the APSCUF coaches representative); the SGA; the University Curriculum Committee; and the President's Cabinet. The Faculty Senate, although not part of the formal shared governance system, is valued for its wide-ranging input on a variety of issues. The President and Provost are typically invited to one or more Faculty Senate

meetings annually and attend when invited. The shared governance system has its own Shared Governance Webpage (VII.1.2).

As part of the new shared governance plan, a Budget and Planning (B&P) Committee was formed; it consists of the Vice President for Administration and Finance (chair), the Vice President for Student Affairs, the SGA president, the local union presidents, a representative of Academic Affairs, a representative of the Liberal Arts Council, and a representative of the Science and Technology Council. The B&P Committee is responsible for ensuring an alignment between the University's Strategic Plan and the University budget, establishing funding priorities, and providing input regarding budget reductions, allocations, and cost containment recommendations. As discussed in Criterion 3 of the Standard VI self-study chapter, the B&P Committee interfaces with the University Strategic Assessment Committee (USAC) to review funding requests (VII.1.3) to improve program outcomes identified in annual *Assessment Results Reports*. B&P Committee Minutes (VII.1.4) from November 2015 to April 2019 are provided for review.

## CRITERION 2

### Governing Body Serving the Mission and Goals (2-a, b, & c)

California University of Pennsylvania is one of 14 universities in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (State System/PASSHE) and is governed by the Cal U COT and the State System BOG. The COT reports to the BOG, and Cal U receives direction and guidance from the State System's Office of the Chancellor (OOC). As the State System's top governing body, BOG decisions override COT decisions. Act 188 of 1982 (VII.2.1) contains sections addressing the roles of the chancellor and the BOG. The COT and BOG are appointed by, and report to, the Governor and the state Senate.

Act 188 of the Pennsylvania Legislature established the State System and describes, in detail, the purposes and general powers of the State System and outlines its governance structure. The BOG (VII.2.1, page 7) is charged with making decisions that affect all 14 institutions in the State System, including employing a chancellor; appointing university presidents; establishing State System policies and procedures, including broad fiscal, personnel, and educational policies; creating new undergraduate and graduate degree programs; approving the annual capital budget requirements for the State System, the universities, the Office of the Chancellor, and the BOG; entering into collective bargaining agreements; recommending approval/disapproval of all State System building projects; and establishing tuition, fees, and related policy.

The duties of the Chancellor are described in Act 188 Section 20-2005-A (VII.2.1, page 8). The Chancellor is responsible for the administration of the State System under the policies prescribed by the BOG and advises the BOG on the formulation of policies. OOC makes sure policies are implemented, including the review and recommendation of academic programs. Other responsibilities include assisting the BOG with presidential appointments, developing an evaluation of the State System, comprehensive State System planning, serving as an ex-officio member of each institution's COT, negotiating collective bargaining agreements for the State System, and entering into multiparty contracts with various entities to promote economic and workforce development.

The OOC and the BOG also provide final approval of all new programs per BOG Policy 1985-01-A (VII.2.2). Additionally, the OOC is currently developing a System Redesign (VII.2.3) effort, intended to strengthen all 14 institutions. Several Cal U administrators, faculty and staff serve on redesign committees and task forces, providing expertise to facilitate needed improvements within the State System.

The structure at the University- and College-levels at Cal U ensures that no governing body or individual member may interfere in the day-to-day operations of the University, which are planned and managed by Cal U's personnel according to the organizational structure. The governance structure provides checks and balances to ensure that the daily operations are conducted ethically, effectively, and in keeping with the University's mission.

## **Governing Body: Council of Trustees (2-b, d, e, f, g, & i)**

Cal U's governing body, as well as those at the other 13 state universities, is the Council of Trustees (COT), which consists of 11 members, one of whom is elected chairperson. Trustees are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Pennsylvania Senate. At least two trustees must be alumni of the institution and one member must be a full-time undergraduate student in good standing. Meetings are held at least quarterly. Although appointment to the COT requires nomination by the Governor and approval by the state Senate, the individual trustee's primary responsibility is to the University itself. Following state Senate confirmation, each trustee must be free from political, financial, and other influences that could interfere with his or her governing responsibilities. Council members are accomplished professionals, active or retired [see COT Vitas (VII.2.4)], with no employment, family, ownership, or other financial interest in the University. In compliance with the PA Public Official and Public Employee State Ethics Act (VII.2.5), COT members are required to file an annual financial disclosure statement, obey the requirements of the Governor's Code of Conduct Executive Order, and adhere to the PASSHE BOG Policy 2012-01 (VII.2.6) concerning conflict of interest. The Commonwealth publishes a Trustee Handbook (VII.2.7) from the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees, which identifies the role of a COT member (pg.12), including sections on the appointment process (pg. 7), responsibilities to the university (pg. 11), and ethical and legal obligations (pg. 28).

Act 188 describes the powers and duties of the COT. The COT approves policies, procedures, and academic programs, and directs and monitors the university's administration. Key roles and responsibilities of the COT include: making recommendations to the Chancellor for the appointment, retention, and/or dismissal of the University President; reviewing and approving standards for admission, policies for discipline and expulsion of students, proposed schools and colleges, academic programs and awarding of degrees, the university's annual operating and capital budgets, all contracts and purchases, charges (room, board, and fees, except student activity fees), making maintenance and construction recommendations to the BOG, and taking other actions as necessary to effectuate the powers and duties delegated to the COT by Act 188.

The COT also conducts an annual evaluation of the University President and forwards its recommendations to the Chancellor, who may add notes for submission to the State System BOG as indicated in PASSHE BOG Policy 2002-03-A Evaluating Presidents (VII.2.8). COT Meeting Minutes of the general session of COT quarterly meetings are posted on the COT Website (VII.2.9) and in the evidence inventory (VII.2.10).

## **Policies: Oversight of Teaching, Learning, and Management Processes (2-c & d)**

The Cal U administration is charged with independent day-to-day oversight and management of all teaching, learning, and management processes. The COT has authority for the oversight of the quality of educational programs, the awarding of degrees and certificates, College finances, policies related to personnel, and the appointment of the University President.

The faculty carries primary responsibility for the initiation, revision, and quality of the curriculum. A rigorous approval process depicted in Standard III is approved by majority vote from governance constituents outlined in the Curriculum Approval Process (VII.2.11). Approved council proposals are forwarded to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC), whose Bylaws (VII.2.12) and Policies and Procedures (VII.2.13) ensure that all proposed course syllabi and program structures include common elements from standardized Course Master Syllabus Proposals (VII.2.14) and Graduate and Undergraduate Program Advisement Templates (VII.2.15). Once approved by the UCC, curriculum proposals are reviewed and considered for final institution-level approval by the Provost. When the UCC and the Provost approve new academic programs, they are additionally reviewed and considered for approval by the President and COT. Once new programs are approved at the highest governance levels of the University, they are forwarded for final approval by the State System Chancellor. The quality of educational programs is reflected in the University's revised annual assessment and periodic program review process described in Criterion 1 of the Standard III self-study chapter.



The University Organizational Charts (VII.2.16) delineate positions within departments, Colleges, and other aspects of the University. The Office of the President is responsible for all aspects of University functions. Vice presidents serving under the President include the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, as well as vice presidents for Student Affairs, Administration and Finance, Enrollment Management, Communications and Marketing, and University Development/Alumni Relations.

The design and delivery of the student experience is under the direction of the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. University departments and administrators reporting to the Provost include Dean/Associate Vice President of Library Services, Associate Provost/Vice President of Accreditation and Assessment, Associate Vice President for Innovation, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Dean of the Eberly College of Science and Technology, and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Department chairs report to their respective College deans. Each of these divisions has its own administrative and governance structure set by its leadership.

Faculty performance review and evaluation is performed within the guidelines of Article 12 of the APSCUF Collective Bargaining Agreement (VII.2.17) as detailed in Criterion 2 of the Standard III chapter of the self-study report. The CBA also addresses faculty appointment (Article 11), tenure (Article 15), and promotion (Article 16), which are directly related to faculty qualifications and performance.

### **Policy-Making Role in Financial Affairs and Auditing (2-e)**

Annual financial audits of the University's finances and processes are conducted by an external audit firm for the fiscal year. The external auditors meet with University leadership including the University President, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Associate Vice President for Finance. Once the audit team completes its collection and inspection of records, the audited financial statements are prepared and presented to University leadership and the COT. The audit partner presents the outcomes at the winter COT meeting.

As described in Criterion 3 of the Standard VI chapter, the University's Budget and Planning Committee, a cross-functional shared governance group of administrators, faculty, staff, and students, employs a multi-level process to review and prioritize funding requests clearly linked to institution- and unit-level outcomes.

### **Regular Evaluation of Administrative Performance (2-f)**

The COT evaluates the President as delineated in Act 188 of 1982 (VII.2.1), Section 20-2009-A "to make recommendations to the Chancellor for the appointment, retention, or dismissal of the president following consultation with students, faculty, and alumni" (pg. 11). These powers and duties also flow from section 20-2006-A, which requires the establishment of policies and procedures to be applied by the Chancellor, BOG, and each COT in evaluating the President and recommending the selection, retention, or dismissal of the President from the respective institution per BOG Policy 2002-03-A (VII.2.8).

### **Policies: Complies with Conflict of Interest Guidelines and Ensures Impartiality (2-h)**

As detailed in Criterion 4 of Standard II, Cal U employees, including COT members, must abide by the PA Public Official and Public Employee State Ethics Act (VII.2.5). The Ethics Act prohibits a public official or employee from taking action that would result in a conflict of interest. PASSHE BOG Policy 2012-01 (VII.2.6) "provides a framework to manage, reduce, or eliminate conflicts of interest in research, education, and service activities." It covers sponsored activities, including research and instructional activities, and applies to both faculty and staff. In addition, the University requires certain individuals (those seeking or nominated for public office, public officials, certain public employees, and solicitors) to file an annual State Ethics Commission Statement of Financial Interests Form (VII.2.18). They also must adhere to PASSHE Procedure Standard 2016-22 Management of Financial Conflict of Interest (VII.2.19).

### CRITERION 3

#### **Chief Executive (President) with Expertise, Authority, and Autonomy (3-a, b, & c)**

The selection of university presidents in the State System is under the authority of BOG Policy 1983-13-A Process for Recommending Presidential Appointments (VII.3.1). On May 16, 2012, Cal U Provost Geraldine M. Jones was appointed Acting President following the dismissal of Dr. Angelo Armenti, Jr. who had served in that capacity for nearly 20 years. Shortly thereafter, the BOG named President Jones as Interim President, a post she held for nearly four years. On April 7, 2016, upon the recommendation of the COT, the BOG appointed her as Cal U's seventh president. President Jones has been employed at Cal U for more than four decades, as a faculty member (1974 to 2000), Assistant Dean and later Dean of the College of Education and Human Services (2000 to 2008), Provost (2008 to 2012), and now President, as shown by her curriculum vitae, which is included in the President's Vitae (VII.3.2).

Since assuming office, notable accomplishments under President Jones' leadership include developing Cal U's 2015-20 Strategic Plan, Charting Our Path; stabilizing Cal U's financial standing and establishing historical highs for the institution's net fund balance; creating the University's first Strategic Enrollment Plan; establishing Cal U's first doctoral degree programs, in health science (D.H.Sc.), criminal justice (D.C.J.), educational leadership (Ed.D.), and physical therapy (DPT); developing a new system of shared governance (reported in the 2017 MSCHE Monitoring Report); establishing the annual Strike a Spark conference, a showcase of student research and creative talents; creating the Center for Undergraduate Research; implementing a successful Winter College; securing the largest philanthropic gift in the University's history (\$4.5 million) and subsequently establishing the Karen and Tom Rutledge Institute for Early Childhood Education; and developing numerous new academic degree and certificate programs in high-demand fields, refocusing the institution on its special mission in science and technology.

As Cal U's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President Jones is responsible for all aspects of the institution, including sole authority for hiring, promoting, disciplining, and terminating employees; setting its goals and direction; and identifying and prudently utilizing these resources. She is responsible for ensuring that Cal U remains focused and aligned with its Strategic Plan, vision, and mission. The President's authority is outlined in Act 188 of 1982 (VII.2.1) Section 20- 2010-A, which gives university presidents authority to make and implement campus policies pertaining to instructional, research, and public service programs, and to define academic standards in accordance with policies of the BOG following consultation with the COT, faculty, and students. Additionally, presidents are directed by the BOG to prepare and submit to the Chancellor the annual operating and capital budget requirements for the institution.

The President's performance review is completed annually by the COT; a more extensive review is performed triennially by the COT with the assistance of an outside consultant appointed by the State System Chancellor. The consultant, in turn, submits a report to the State System BOG. Many constituencies are consulted for the comprehensive review. The process for evaluating university presidents is described in detail in BOG Policy 2002-03-A Evaluating Presidents (VII.2.8). The annual evaluation of the President is forwarded to the Office of the Chancellor and used by both the Chancellor and BOG to determine presidential contract renewals or extensions, as well as merit pay increases, given that executive raises are approved by the governing body. The triennial evaluation of President Jones is currently underway.

President Jones is assisted in her duties by her Chief of Staff and two administrative assistants. She maintains a Cabinet consisting of senior leadership, which includes the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Communications and Marketing, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Associate Vice President for Finance, and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

The President conducts annual performance reviews of all vice presidents and meets with each on an

individual basis to review outcomes and set goals for the next year. Annual evaluations are used by the President to determine contract extensions/renewals and merit pay increases if raises for managers have been approved by the State System BOG.

### **Well-Qualified Cadre of Senior Administrators (3-d)**

The President works closely with her dedicated and well-qualified senior administrative team. As evidenced by their curriculum vitae, the President's Cabinet is well-qualified by training and experience for the positions they hold. Performance of administrators is assessed annually to review areas for improvement, as well as strengths and weaknesses, in order to best support the mission and vision of the University. The Cal U annual performance evaluation is used as one of the mechanisms for institutional assessment.

## **CRITERION 4**

### **Administrative Characteristics and Structures Supporting the Mission (4-a, b, c, d, e, & f)**

As shown in the Cal U Organizational Chart (VII.2.16), Cal U's administration has a clearly defined organizational structure. The President's Cabinet, the deans, and other strategic-level administrators are highly qualified and have the credentials and professional experience to carry out the roles and responsibilities required to effect the University's mission. [Refer to Administrators' Vitae: (President's Cabinet (VII.4.1); Academic Deans (VII.4.2); Academic Associate Vice Presidents (VII.4.3)) for the strategic leaders' curriculum vitae]. The performance of all administrative personnel (managers) is evaluated annually and is based on a formal evaluation instrument, as shown in the Manager Evaluation Form (VII.4.4). These evaluations are both mandated and supported by the University's Office of Human Resources.

The administration has regular engagement with faculty, staff, and students in order to advance the institution's goals and objectives. For example, early each semester the President holds a faculty and staff convocation to report on the state of the University. The President hosts a similar student convocation each fall; each spring she hosts "Campus Talk," an open question-and-answer session with students. Additionally, the President hosts Student Government leaders twice annually at a dinner at the President's residence. Meetings with students or Student Government leadership are held as needed throughout the academic year, including monthly meetings with the Student Government Association (SGA) and Student Association Inc. (SAI) presidents. Campus publications such as the "Daily Announcements," information emailed daily to members of the campus community, and the *California Journal*, delivered online and biweekly in print, are venues for notifying faculty, staff, and students about opportunities for engagement with administration. All academic departments are asked to provide annual reports reflecting on accomplishments and upcoming plans related to the University's, College's, and department's mission and goals.

Regular engagement with the faculty occurs in a variety of forums and methods. As discussed in Criterion 1, administrators are present at the monthly APSCUF Meet and Discuss Sessions (VII.4.5). Additional interactions occur at the monthly Staff Leadership Council Sessions (VII.4.6). These sessions are part of the formal shared governance system, where members discuss issues and concerns emanating from the unions and/or the administration. Efforts to improve communication and the governance process are common themes of these meetings. Additionally, each academic Dean holds regular College Council meetings with department chairs within the College: see the Eberly College of Science and Technology Minutes (VII.4.7), College of Education and Human Services Minutes (VII.4.8), College of Liberal Arts Minutes (VII.4.9), and the School of Graduate Studies and Research Minutes (VII.4.10). Other governance body minutes (e.g., academic departments, General Education Committee, Curriculum Committee, and Student Government) are available upon request.

The President and Provost attend Faculty Senate meetings when invited, typically once per semester. Every year, the Faculty Senate surveys its members to provide unofficial evaluations of the President, Provost, and academic Deans. The results are shared with those administrators. The Faculty Senate provides valuable input on a variety of issues, but is not currently part of the formal shared governance system.

Academic department chairs meet with the Provost monthly at Provost's Council. Also invited to the Provost's Council are the Director of the Honors Program, Director of the Faculty Professional Development Center, and Director of the Women's Studies Program. Additionally, the academic department chairs convene monthly for the Chairperson's Forum, where they solicit topics to discuss with the Provost at the Provost's Council meeting. The registrar attends each meeting of the University Curriculum Committee as the Provost's designee.

## CRITERION 5

The assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration is an ongoing process at Cal U. The administration actively supports the concept of shared governance in its recently revised shared governance system. The basic premise of the shared governance system is that good communication and input from various constituencies and stakeholders is sought prior to final administrative decision making.

In 2014, a Task Force on University Shared Governance (VII.5.1), appointed by President Jones, concluded its work and submitted its final report and recommendations for review. The work of the task force followed the dissolution of the University Forum by the COT based on consensus of the University community that it had become unmanageable, ineffective, and increasingly unable to achieve quorums for conducting business.

At its initial meeting of the task force, President Jones charged this body to review and codify the existing shared governance system on campus and describe how the various governing entities relate to one another, and to develop recommendations for improved shared governance with a goal of streamlining, simplifying, and formalizing the system while permitting all campus constituencies to have a voice. After nearly a year of deliberation, the group proposed the current system of shared governance. Finally, a stated goal of the University's Strategic Plan 2015-20 to operate "with sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices" was effected in 2015 by implementing the task force's shared governance system recommendations for improvement.

In 2019, Cal U administered the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey (VII.5.2) to assess views on diversity and the state of the campus climate. Overall, data reveal views and experiences of different groups on the Cal U campus are consistent with those of different groups on other campuses. Results depict no significant difference among respondents' overall satisfaction with key indicators (1) Campus Climate for Diversity and Equity, and (2) Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity. However, persons of color and faculty reported fewer positive views than their counterparts at other institutions [HEDS 2019 Comparison Report (VII.5.3)]. The data indicated 75.15% of all participants were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with overall campus climate, with significantly lower levels of satisfaction reported by non-white undergraduate students (60.71%), who also believe they have less institutional support. These data provide key information to inform planning and assessment and represent opportunities for the University to improve its governance structure. In response to these concerns, a standing Diversity Committee in the Student Affairs division agreed to expand its charge to develop a campus-wide plan with related programming to improve climate indices with biennial survey assessments with the HEDS Climate Survey.

In 2019, a survey was administered to the COT to assess members' role in shared governance. The survey provided information regarding COT members' perceptions of their understanding and engagement across categories of primary governing responsibilities and competencies, including roles and responsibilities, productivity, academic oversight, financial oversight, and personal assessment. Six of eleven members responded to the survey. The instrument employed a Likert-type scale, and free-response questions allowed trustees to provide comments. Results indicated that members understand and support the core purpose, values, and goals of the University. Members also indicated that they evaluate financial reports to assess actual performance compared to the budget projection. Two members indicated they "don't think the Council is used effectively as we are well educated individuals with years of experience in many areas that can be useful ... and we are rarely called upon for help." Because of the low participation rate, the survey will be repeated in 2020;

in general, however, the data indicate that the COT functions as outlined by Act 188, as shown in COT Self-Assessment Results (VII.5.4).

Prior to the COT survey, the 2018-19 AAUP Governance Survey (VII.5.5) was distributed to all University faculty and staff members. The 27-item survey contained questions regarding governance climate, institutional communication, the COT's role, the President's role, the faculty's role, joint decision-making, and assessing structural arrangements for governance. Results reflect faculty's belief that trustees, the administration, and the faculty model collegiality, respect, tolerance, and civility toward other members of the campus community and one another. Additionally, faculty acknowledge that structures and arrangements for governance processes exist at the University. Faculty also agreed that members are afforded an appropriate degree of autonomy in their areas of responsibility by the administration and governing board, and appropriately exercise decision making in faculty personnel matters. However, respondents pointed to a need for improved communication and trust among all parties, and greater involvement in joint decision-making

## CONCLUSION

A detailed review of Cal U's governance, leadership, and administration illuminate several strengths and challenges.

### Strengths

- Cal U is one of 14 State System institutions. As the Chancellor's System Redesign initiative takes shape, it is anticipated that the resulting changes will strengthen the entire System. Improving student access and success are at the center of the System Redesign effort.
- The new Shared Governance Plan implemented in Fall 2015 facilitates improved communication between University administration, faculty and staff, and the student body. The implementation of mandatory monthly Meet and Discuss forums, which include representatives from upper-level administration, faculty, staff, and student representatives, demonstrates the active role the University is taking to strengthen cooperation and communication among all parties. The new Shared Governance Plan creates an avenue of inclusion in the shared governance structure for University stakeholders at the student, staff, faculty, and administrative levels.
- The University recognizes that diversity of opinion is essential to a culture of inclusion and accountability and is committed to continuous improvement in governance and communication. The University's willingness to actively solicit feedback from stakeholders for assessing the effectiveness of Cal U's governance, leadership, and administration is appreciated at all levels of governance.
- The quality and stability of Cal U's senior leadership team and the relationship between senior leadership and University employees, particularly the faculty and the faculty union, are significantly better than when the previous president held office. Although differences arise, both the administration and faculty are willing to discuss their differences and seek common-ground solutions in a respectful fashion. This is the foundation for the shared governance system currently in place.
- Cal U's current president (Geraldine M. Jones) is a valuable leader. She brings many years of experience at every level of the academic enterprise. Her 44 years in academia and strong relationships built during that time serve her and the institution well during difficult times in higher education. President Jones actively seeks differing opinions before difficult decisions are made and has staffed the administration with capable individuals. President Jones is seen by the community as a capable, visionary leader. She has been recognized as such by many organizations including ATHENA, the NAACP, and other important community organizations.

### Challenges

- Many public universities confront the same challenges as Cal U vis-à-vis governance, leadership, and administration. Declining state support coupled with declining enrollment presents challenges

with resources and budgets. Lean budget times make every decision more difficult and more strategic.

- The AAUP Governance Survey results show a large gap in the perceptions of shared governance by faculty, staff, and administration. Because of projected budget shortfalls, the administration has taken steps to reduce spending in a variety of areas, including personnel. Controversial measures have included reducing or eliminating discretionary workload equivalencies for faculty, and it remains to be seen what impact these cuts will have on faculty morale and educational quality. Efforts to incorporate faculty and staff in productive conversations to effectively address financial difficulties, while improving the quality of the student experience, will certainly be a challenge. This will certainly require better communication and greater trust among the administration, faculty, and staff, as more than half of faculty and staff surveyed do not feel their voices have been properly solicited or appreciated in strategic decision-making areas such as long-range planning, budgeting, and personnel, including the selection of senior-level University administrators.

### **Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation**

- Assessment of the shared governance system clearly points to opportunities for improvement. Because faculty and staff report a weakness in institutional communication, the first improvement will be to develop better tools and strategies for communication about the shared governance system and how it operates. Cal U is addressing the issue in part through the creation of a Shared Governance Decision-Making Matrix Tool (VII.5.6). The matrix identifies the roles of various groups in key academic and financially oriented decisions. Its purpose is to provide guidance and clarity in identifying which University constituents have authority to make and approve decisions, and which constituents are to be consulted and offer recommendations for those decisions.
- The matrix should be employed to facilitate improved assessment of the governance model. All governance stakeholders should be periodically assessed to determine if the mechanisms of shared governance are effectively contributing to decision making at Cal U. When communication problems are discovered, the University should consider adjusting the model to improve communication for better-informed decision making. Additionally, the current Shared Governance webpage should be revised to include detailed illustrations and narratives describing all elements of the governance process.
- Given the results of the shared governance survey in the context of the current lean budget environment, the administration also must work to better gain the trust of faculty and staff. This can be accomplished by proactively seeking earlier faculty and staff input through appropriate governance entities for discussions about important university-wide issues. At the State System level, the Chancellor's initiatives to foster openness and transparency are an important step in establishing trust between state officials and statewide faculty union representatives. Trust at the state level can be applied to encourage similar trust at the local level, particularly if more faculty and staff input is included for all levels of administrative decisions.
- Better communication across the University could occur by mitigating existing governance silos (e.g., academic, staff, student government) with the creation of a strategic-level integrative governance committee (e.g., University Senate or University Strategic Assessment Committee) capable of deliberations regarding important, university-wide issues. An integrative committee at the convergence of the governance model also could strengthen the link between university-wide assessment and the existing Planning and Budgeting Committee as expected by Requirement of Affiliation #10.
- Finally, Cal U should turn self-study Institutional Priority #4, (Creating a Comprehensive System of Institutional Effectiveness) into a goal for the 2021-26 University Strategic Plan, with related outcomes for personnel and data sustainability. Cal U should formalize and continue to appropriately staff an Office of Institutional Effectiveness with a minimum of an Associate Provost-level director, a permanent university-wide Assessment Manager, and a full-time Management Technician to operate and sustain the digital assessment management system.

- Finally, a second wave of the AAUP Governance Survey should be administered to monitor changes in attitudes and perceptions toward shared governance initiatives and make improvements where needed. When all is accomplished, students, faculty, and staff will have more confidence and input in the shared governance system and its operation. Most importantly, the perception of shared governance by the different stakeholders will have better alignment for the common good as the University works together to make it a better place for all.