**California Polytechnic State University Submission of Themes**

**for the**

**Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation**

**Executive Summary**From the start, the Accreditation Liaison Office/Senior Vice Provost (ALO/SVP) and the Associate Vice Provost (AVP) were convinced that the self-study would probably have to address issues of student success, particularly regarding progress to a timely degree completion, as well as diversity, equity, and conclusion, which had been a special concern of the last WASC review team and the WASC Commission, as well as a continuing priority for the campus. Significantly, at the intersection of these two areas of concern was the challenge of closing the graduation gaps between groups of students — a high priority of the CSU’s Graduation Initiative (GI) 2025.

To test this

Cal PoCCal Poly’s proposed main theme is “Promoting the Success of All Cal Poly Students While Achieving the Goals of the California State University’s Graduation Initiative 2025” (GI 2025). These are co-equal efforts, which reflect the initiative’s dual nature. It is focused on the success of all students as measured by overall graduation rates for first-time, first-year (FTFY) and new transfer (NTR) students, while it also demands that sustained attention be given to the academic performance of key groups of students, as indicated by the graduation-rate gaps that exist between them and their peers. It is understood that closing these gaps will go a long way toward helping the university achieve its overall graduation-rate goals.

This main theme and the institutional effort that it implies are both supported by the three proposed sub-themes:

* “Recruiting and Retaining a More Diverse Community of Students, Staff, and Faculty” will address the number of students who choose to leave Cal Poly before completing their degrees, which is a significant component of the graduation-rate gap. Furthermore, it is understood that our success in this area depends on the university’s ability to recruit and retain a diverse community of staff and faculty.
* “Developing a Campus Culture that is Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive” will address issues of campus and community climate that can encourage students to apply to Cal Poly, accept an admissions offer, and then persist to degree completion.
* “Teaching and Learning How to Live and Work in a Diverse World" will concern student experiences in the curriculum and co-curriculum, which will help them to thrive in their personal and professional lives, while helping them to successfully navigate the increasingly diverse world of the campus and beyond.

As described above, the main theme and three sub-themes will focus the entire campus on achieving the goals of GI 2025. These themes emerged in a survey that was administered to various campus groups while explaining the thematic pathway for reaffirmation (TPR). These themes are closely aligned with the results of the Collective Impact process, a participatory planning effort sponsored by the Office of University Diversity and Inclusion, and with sections of the Cal Poly Strategic Plan that address campus demographics, campus climate, and diversity learning.

**WSCUC Standards of Accreditation:**

1. Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes.  The institution has a clear and explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in both the higher education community and society, and its contribution to the public good.  It functions with integrity, transparency, and autonomy.

2. Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

The institution achieves its purposes and attains its educational objectives at the institutional and program level through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning and success.  The institution demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively by evaluating valid and reliable evidence of learning and by supporting the success of every student.

3. Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through investments in human, physical, fiscal, technological, and information resources and through an appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These key resources and organizational structures promote the achievement of institutional purposes and educational objectives and create a high-quality environment for learning.

4. Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The institution engages in sustained, evidence-based, and participatory self-reflection about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. The institution considers the changing environment of higher education in envisioning its future. These activities inform both institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The results of institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities, to plan, and to improve quality and effectiveness.

(from WSCUC, *2013 Handbook of Accreditation Revised*, pp. 12-21)

**WSCUC Criteria for Review (CFRs) Explicitly Related to Assessment of Student Learning:**

Standard 1. Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

1.2. Educational objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution, are consistent with stated purposes, and are demonstrably achieved. The institution regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public data about student achievement, including measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

2.2a. Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and life-long learning. These programs ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking. In addition, baccalaureate programs actively foster creativity, innovation, an appreciation for diversity, ethical and civic responsibility, civic engagement, and the ability to work with others. Baccalaureate programs also ensure breadth for all students in cultural and aesthetic, social and political, and scientific and technical knowledge expected of educated persons. Undergraduate degrees include significant in-depth study in a given area of knowledge (typically described in terms of a program or major).

2.3. The institution’s student learning outcomes and standards of performance are clearly stated at the course, program, and, as appropriate, institutional level. These outcomes and standards are reflected in academic programs, policies, and curricula, and are aligned with advisement, library, and information and technology resources, and the wider learning environment.

2.4. The institution’s student learning outcomes and standards of performance are developed by faculty and widely shared among faculty, students, staff, and (where appropriate) external stakeholders. The institution’s faculty take collective responsibility for establishing appropriate standards of performance and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards.

2.6. The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated learning outcomes and established standards of performance. The institution ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards that faculty use to evaluate student work.

2.7. All programs offered by the institution are subject to systematic program review. The program review process includes, but is not limited to, analyses of student achievement of the program’s learning outcomes; retention and graduation rates; and, where appropriate, results of licensing examination and placement, and evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional organizations.

2.9. The institution recognizes and promotes appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, assessment, student learning, and service.

2.11. Consistent with its purposes, the institution offers co-curricular programs that are aligned with its academic goals, integrated with academic programs, and designed to support all students’ personal and professional development. The institution assesses the effectiveness of its co-curricular programs and uses the results for improvement.

Standard 3. Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

3.3. The institution maintains appropriate and sufficiently supported faculty and staff development activities designed to improve teaching, learning, and assessment of learning outcomes.

Standard 4. Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

4.1. The institution employs a deliberate set of quality-assurance processes in both academic and non-academic areas, including new curriculum and program approval processes, periodic program review, assessment of student learning, and other forms of ongoing evaluation. These processes include: collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; tracking learning results over time; using comparative data from external sources; and improving structures, services, processes, curricula, pedagogy, and learning results.

4.3. Leadership at all levels, including faculty, staff, and administration, is committed to improvement based on the results of inquiry, evidence, and evaluation. Assessment of teaching, learning, and the campus environment—in support of academic and co-curricular objectives—is undertaken, used for improvement, and incorporated into institutional planning processes.

4.4. The institution, with significant faculty involvement, engages in ongoing inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning, and the conditions and practices that ensure that the standards of performance established by the institution are being achieved. The faculty and other educators take responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes and uses the results for improvement of student learning and success. The findings from such inquiries are applied to the design and improvement of curricula, pedagogy, and assessment methodology.

4.5. Appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, students, and others designated by the institution, are regularly involved in the assessment and alignment of educational programs.