

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) of
Accreditation

To: California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

April 27-29, 2022

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

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

IA. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

Description of Institution

The founding of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly) began when a local journalist gathered a group of citizens to petition for a state school in San Luis Obispo. The school was launched as a state-funded, secondary-level vocational institution apart from the regular state school system. On October 1, 1901 three instructors initiated a student body of eleven men and four women into the university's first offerings for three-year certificates in agriculture, domestic science, and mechanics, along with English, history, or economics. While not yet defined, the historic concept of Cal Poly's 'learn by doing' philosophy was cemented early and continues as its foundation.

Today, Cal Poly is a primarily residential campus offering 66 bachelor's degrees and 34 master's degrees. Heavy on the undergraduate experience, as of fall 2021 Cal Poly had 21,093 undergraduates (96.5% of the total) and 776 graduate students (3.5%). In 2020-21, the university awarded 5,415 bachelor's degrees and 590 master's degrees. During fall quarter 2020, Cal Poly had 964 full-time faculty members and 495 part-time faculty members. The student-to-faculty ratio in 2020 was 19:1. Reflecting the town of San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly students and faculty are predominantly white/non-Hispanic. Cal Poly is also one of five universities in the nation with a curriculum that places undergraduate students into their major courses in their first year (referred to during the site visit as an "upside down" model) where General Education is worked in throughout the four years, as opposed to traditional universities that have general education primarily in the first two years of study.

Cal Poly operates under the governance of the California State University (CSU) system Board of Trustees and the administrative jurisdiction of the CSU Office of the Chancellor. While Cal Poly resides in the CSU system, the university is considered distinctive in that it specializes in professional fields such as

agriculture, architecture and engineering and is extraordinarily competitive in admissions into its impacted programs (numbers quoted to the on-site team were 68,000 applicants for 6,000 admission spaces – fall 2022 quarter – 59,000 of those applicants first time freshman).

The broad mission of Cal Poly is to foster teaching, scholarship, and service in an environment in which students, staff, and faculty are partners in discovery. The published mission statement goes on to state, “as a polytechnic university, Cal Poly promotes the application of theory to practice. As a comprehensive institution, Cal Poly provides a balanced education in the arts, sciences, and technology, while encouraging cross-disciplinary and co-curricular experiences. As an academic community, Cal Poly values free inquiry, cultural and intellectual diversity, mutual respect, civic engagement, and social and environmental responsibility.” These stated steps are the foundation to achieve a future Cal Poly or what is stated as the vision of the university to be “the nation's premier comprehensive polytechnic university, an innovative institution that develops and inspires whole-system thinkers to serve California and to help solve global challenges”.

Accreditation History

As stated in the institution’s self-study, Cal Poly was accredited by WSCUC for the first time in 1951, earning a series of five-year reaffirmations (with interim visits and institutional reports) until 1980. The university received ten-year reaffirmations in 1980 (with a five-year interim report), 1990 (with progress reports in 1992 and 1994), 2000, and 2012 - with a required 2015 interim report. With a firm and lengthy accreditation history revealing broad compliance in all the standards, Cal Poly was accepted by WSCUC for a Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) review in July of 2019. This thematic approach was intended to allow Cal Poly to further work on issues and concerns beyond the issues of compliance and to continue to advance their mission and vision under an approved theme. As will be further explained and expanded upon in this team report, Cal Poly utilized an extensive organization of

campus community input to apply and be approved to undergo the TPR process under the theme, “Promoting the Success of All Cal Poly Students While Achieving the Goals of the CSU’s Graduation Initiative 2025.” While the campus used this as the overarching theme, to further direct the efforts of this broad theme, three more focused subthemes emerged: Subtheme A, Recruiting and Retaining a More Diverse Community of Students, Staff, and Faculty; Subtheme B, Developing a Campus Culture that Is Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive; and Subtheme C, Teaching and Learning How to Live and Work in a Diverse World. These subthemes will be examined at length in this report.

IB. Description of Team’s Review Process

The on-site visit to Cal Poly took place April 27 through April 29, 2022. The team was greeted with exceptional hospitality both by the hotel and the Cal Poly team. The team’s work room on campus was easily accessible and provided the team a comfortable place to conduct the review. The team would like to specifically thank President Armstrong for his leadership and thoughtful engagement. A special thank you is also extended to Dr. Bruno Giberti, and his attentive staff, for their extraordinary effort in facilitating every aspect of a well-organized site visit. Finally, the orientation to and assistance with the TPR process provided by Susan Opp, as the WSCUC vice president, was both helpful, greatly appreciated, and necessary as the team worked through the new process. Over the course of the visit the team met with administrators, faculty, professional staff, and students and all were engaged and candid, providing the information necessary for a thorough TPR visit. Across the institution there is a continuity of institutional mission, and a clear dedication to students and campus community.

In preparation for the site visit, the team worksheets and meeting notes were synthesized and reviewed collectively during a pre-visit team call. Cal Poly’s ALO, Dr. Bruno Giberti and his staff worked in conjunction with the team’s assistant chair to prepare a draft schedule for the team prior to the onsite

visit. The team reviewed the visit schedule and assigned team members to specific interview sessions. A confidential email account was established to allow for greater participation from the campus community and to receive any information that might be deemed sensitive. It was monitored by the assistant chair, and its contents were shared with all the team members.

The visit began with a team executive planning session in the hotel on Tuesday April 26, 2022 where specific lines of inquiry for each on campus meeting were reviewed and confirmed. The two days' campus visit started on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 with campus constituents including university leaders, campus administrators, faculty, staff, and students representing both undergraduate and graduate programs. The team was able to inquire about the submitted report, the process for selecting, investigating and understanding the themes as approved by WSCUC, and the broad institutional understanding of strengths and areas of opportunity for the campus at large. The team was appreciative of the candor and interest exhibited by the campus participants and learned a great deal about Cal Poly's organizational structure, mission and values, and its efforts toward achieving its strategic future. The visit ended on April 29, 2022, with the team privately finalizing their observations and a sequestered meeting between the team chair and university president. The final commendations and recommendations were read out loud by the team chair in a final on campus exit meeting that officially ended the onsite review.

IC. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

The team commends Cal Poly for the detail of the review and report. The creation of the themes appeared to have been in alignment with strategic plans, resulted in productive reflection, and the beginning of actions toward a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). It was apparent to the team that considerable time and energy were invested in writing the essays and compiling substantial supporting documentation. The report thoughtfully addressed issues that emerged from the prior

reaffirmation review, university approved strategic initiatives, and a very clear push from those faculty and staff who are passionate about Cal Poly integrating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment in the service of educational effectiveness and belonging. The team appreciated the institution's self-appraisal that, while discussions and some action has been taken toward DEI initiatives, there is still opportunity to reach the institution's full potential.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

IIA. Component 1: Response to Previous Commission Actions

For the 2012 WSCUC review, based on the 2008 Handbook of Accreditation, Cal Poly participated in an Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) and earned a ten-year reaccreditation term, with an Interim Report in spring 2015 to update progress. In the letter, the Commission commended Cal Poly on their creation and adherence to a mission statement, university wide commitment to faculty governance, and adoption of well-framed learning outcomes and effective assessment practices. The Commission also stressed two areas of recommended improvement for Cal Poly: 1) promoting diversity and inclusive excellence, and 2) assessing and improving undergraduate learning.

Cal Poly's 2022 TPR self-study report addressed the Commission Action Letter and Interim Report and emphasized that the Commission's guidance led campus leadership to decide to apply for the new Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) for their reaccreditation review when invited to do so by WSCUC. In fall 2017, the Senior Vice Provost and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and the Associate Vice Provost made presentations to various campus constituents regarding selections of themes. Each stakeholder in participation was given a short survey that instructed them to review a long list of potential themes, with instructions to select three they felt were most significant. The results reflected an overwhelming campus concern for persisting issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as a

commitment to student success as represented by “Graduation Initiative 2025” as developed by the CSU system. Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) is a CSU systemwide effort to, “increase graduation rates for all CSU students while eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps” (Cal Poly self-study, page 6). The self-study from Cal Poly indicated that the emphasis on DEI and achievement gaps was not only guided by the 2012 commission letter, it was also steered by the results of the internal “2019 Cal Poly Experience” (CPX) climate study. This survey indicated that, “Cal Poly students’ feelings of dissatisfaction and being discriminated against corresponded much more highly with Black, Latinx, Native, and Asian/Asian American identity than with any other category” (Cal Poly self-study, page 12).

In July 2019, Cal Poly applied for and received approval from WSCUC to participate in a TPR review under the theme, “Promoting the Success of All Cal Poly Students While Achieving the Goals of the CSU’s Graduation Initiative 2025.” While the campus used this as the overarching theme, further campus discussion uncovered three more focused subthemes (which will be addressed in this report):

- A. Recruiting and Retaining a More Diverse Community of Students, Staff, and Faculty
- B. Developing a Campus Culture that Is Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive
- C. Teaching and Learning How to Live and Work in a Diverse World

Commission Action 1: Promoting Diversity and Inclusive Excellence.

In 2012, the WSCUC Commission Action Letter articulated the need for Cal Poly to achieve a more diverse faculty and student body, increase retention, persistence and completion rates of all subpopulations of students, and achieve “measurable improvements in campus climate”.

In this newest reaccreditation effort, Cal Poly collected input from across the campus to address the issues surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion. As will be mentioned throughout this team report, the Cal Poly student body is the least diverse in the CSU, and yet they have articulated a commitment to seek “to mirror the diversity and demographics of California” (<https://www.calpoly.edu/diversity-equity->

[and-inclusion](#)). It stood out to the team that the self-study stated, “Cal Poly is the whitest university and serves the smallest percentage of first-generation students out of all CSUs and UCs” (Cal Poly self-study, page 5). The thematic essays, as described in this report, presented deep discussions of what has been accomplished since the Commission’s letter in 2012, as well as opportunities and suggested improvements so Cal Poly can move to be a more diverse, equitable and inclusive campus that is more reflective of and responsive to the state it serves. (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 3.1)

Commission Action 2: Assessing and Improving Undergraduate Learning

According to the self-study, since the last accreditation visit and subsequent Interim Report, Cal Poly has been focused on several student success measures such as a general education revision and a focus on timely articulation for transfer students. Many of the student success initiatives since the last review have come out of the Registrar’s office, including: the introduction of block scheduling; a broad course demand analysis; four-year degree flowcharts for every major; and an “Expected Academic Progress” policy with implications for registration priority. In addition, a mandatory “First Year Success Program” for students on academic probation was designed by University Advising. (CFRs 2.10, 2.12, 2.13)

The team was impressed by Cal Poly’s willingness to understand how assessment across campus was conducted, where in the colleges and programs it was (or was not) considered effective, and general attitudes around student learning outcomes assessment. By utilizing several different indirect measures, the campus was able to understand the different needs and priorities of faculty and student affairs around assessment and how to improve the processes by which data was not only collected, but used for improvement. As stated on page 17 of the self-study, “To effectively build a culture of continuous learning and improvement, where the results of assessment are communicated widely and issues

identified by assessment efforts are addressed, it is first necessary to understand and leverage the existing culture.” (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 4.1, 4.3)

Under Component 2: Standard 4, as well as the thematic essays, this report will address the campus commitment to assessing and improving undergraduate learning. However, to further tie the two 2012 commission recommendations together, Cal Poly leadership should empower, train and encourage faculty to use the already in place processes of assessment and student learning to further serve the causes of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Assessment and improving undergraduate learning can provide the foundation for both DEI accountability and quality improvement, in keeping with Cal Poly's distinctive mission as a comprehensive polytechnic university that seeks to prepare students for life and work in the 21st century. (CFRs 1.4, 2.4, 2.6, 2.10, 4.1, 4.3)

IIB. Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements

The team commends Cal Poly for its thorough engagement in the assessment and documentation of the Standards and federal requirements and for selecting challenging thematic areas, culminating in the TPR institutional report. Cal Poly was clearly inclusive across the campus community in its TPR vision by integrating various faculty, staff, and students on subcommittees to address Standards 1 through 4 and the three themes. The sections below describe the results of the team’s review of each Standard.

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

As indicated earlier in this report, Cal Poly’s mission is easily accessible and clear, to “foster teaching, scholarship and service in a Learn by Doing environment where students, staff, and faculty are partners in discovery. As a comprehensive institution, Cal Poly provides a balanced education in the arts,

sciences, and technology, while encouraging cross-disciplinary and co-curricular experiences.” (CFRs 1.1, 1.2) The institution’s program learning outcomes are clearly linked to, and aligned with, the institutional learning outcomes and diversity learning outcomes. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2)

The institution’s policies, procedures, and academic and administrative practices are publicly available, including information regarding commitment to academic freedom. (CFRs 1.3, 1.7) The objectives associated with its degree programs are clearly articulated, learning outcomes are clear, and degree completion rates are publicized. (CFR 1.2) Program information delineates distinctions between degree and non-degree credit; the credit hour policy is accessible, and courses are reviewed to ensure compliance by the department, college, Academic Senate, and registrar. (CFRs 1.6, 1.7) The campus has worked diligently to create a culture of evidence and to ensure that every program is evaluating data on student achievement and providing evidence of student learning. However, as this report highlights, as a campus community Cal Poly would benefit from continuing to use data to enhance and guide action in their intended DEI strategic vision. (CFR 1.4)

It is clear from the self-study and from the on-site visit that Cal Poly faculty and staff are passionate about their students, and yet there remains a clear gap between the graduation rates of students based on URM, first-generation, and Pell Grant status, as well as a gender gap. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10). The self-study and on campus interviews also verify that there are many DEI efforts, but they appear to be less coordinated than the campus community would like. (CFR 1.4) There was a stated need to further DEI initiatives with more partnerships with California high schools and the two local community colleges (Cuesta and Allan Hancock), expanding the focused cluster hires dedicated to DEI objectives, and finding ways to routinize DEI-based uses of institutional research data. (CFRs 1.2, 1.4, 2.10, 4.1, 4.2) As the self-study indicated, “It is clear that there must be a collective effort, championed and supported by

university leadership in collaboration with the campus community, to support a culture of evidence and inquiry". (CFRs 1.4, 4.1, 4.2)

The evidence presented under Standard 1 shows that Cal Poly has made an effort to address diversity, equity, and inclusion, though there is still much work to do. (CFR 1.4) The institution's approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion is not yet comprehensive. The campus is looking to its soon-to-be-hired Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) (an interim CDO is currently in place) to provide leadership for this critical undertaking. While the addition of a permanent CDO is mission critical, diversity is the responsibility of the campus community as a whole. The team heard from students, and some faculty, who do not believe that Cal Poly is doing enough to reform and reshape the historically white university. In light of its chosen thematic pathway, there is a need to deeply examine the racialization in institutional practices, policies, and structures in order to radically transform the institution. (CFR 1.4)

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

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

Teaching and Learning

Cal Poly provided satisfactory evidence demonstrating that its academic undergraduate degree programs and graduate degree programs comply with WSCUC Standards. Cal Poly has 34 externally accredited degree programs, as well as six Single Subject Credential Programs and a Multiple Subject Credential Program. The university provides appropriate admission criteria for all their student cohorts of incoming freshmen, transfer students, graduate students, and international students. The team encourages Cal Poly to accelerate the future recruitment processes for diversifying faculty and staff hires. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2)

Both undergraduate and graduate programs have program reviews and adhere to appropriate faculty qualifications. Cal Poly has developed Program Learning Objectives, GE Program Learning Objectives, Diversity Learning Objectives as well as Sustainability Learning Objectives. Cal Poly's guiding principle, "Learn by Doing", is integrated throughout both undergraduate and graduate curricula and provides their students with appropriate and challenging opportunities of practical, discipline-specific learning experiences. Cal Poly has a strong faculty-led assessment infrastructure at the program and institution levels led by the Office of Academic Programs and Planning. Program review policies and procedures were revised in 2018, noting that Academic Programs and Planning office requires undergraduate programs to submit reports each quarter as part of their program review process. It is noted that their overall program review process is very thorough at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)

As noted above in Component 1: Response to Previous Commissions Actions under "Assessing and Improving Undergraduate Learning", Cal Poly administration should further develop the motivation of faculty to participate in program review as a way to harness, increase and measure programmatic DEI efforts. This process seems as though it has begun in the use of the Diversity Learning Outcomes. The team commends Cal Poly on its extensive campus-wide learning outcomes assessment as evident in the intentional bridge building between Student and Academic Affairs as well as the integration of Program Review and Institutional Learning Outcomes. The team also recognized the need for more faculty participation in assessing graduate programs. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6)

The team noticed that there was no standard format for syllabi. Thus, there was unevenness with the material listed on the syllabi including course assignments, learning objectives, commitment to DEI, and relevant student services. Cal Poly may want to consider developing a common standard syllabi format. (CFR 2.4)

Scholarship and Creative Activity

Cal Poly provided comprehensive evidence for the institution's commitment to research, scholarly and creative activity. Their "Teacher-Scholar Model" clearly stated how faculty scholarship provides opportunities for meaningful student engagement. Their Office of Research, Economic Development and Graduate Education provided the research framework including guidelines, regulations and compliance policies as well as support for innovative research projects. With respect to student research opportunities, various programs were cited such as paid undergraduate research work in the colleges, BEACoN program, and the CSU-LSAMP. Students' research outcomes, undergraduate senior projects, and graduate theses were published on the "Digital Commons 'Student Research'" page. The team observed that Cal Poly's strong student research projects have focused on DEI initiatives. The faculty mentors and their students are commended for this outstanding research outcomes that supports their DEI commitment. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9)

Regarding promoting faculty scholarship, teaching, assessment, student learning and service, Cal Poly provided several documents including appropriate references to the bargaining agreement and Academic Senate policies regarding retention, promotion and tenure. Their "Resolution on Defining and Adopting the Teacher-Scholar Model" defines their definition of various areas of scholarship, although they note that "service" as yet to be recognized in their definition of scholarship. (CFRs 2.9)

Student Learning and Success

Cal Poly provided sufficient evidence with relevant links and thorough data documentation for all CFRs for this sub-area. Relevant undergraduate student information for recruitment, admissions and matriculation, including degrees, educational costs and academic advising were described in depth with corresponding links. The infrastructure for undergraduate academic advising has been strengthened by the Cal Poly's response to the CSU system-wide GI 2025 initiative. Cal Poly also offered a wide variety of

student support services with the highlight of their Cal Poly Scholars program. It should be noted that the team recognized a critical need to ensure staff capacity and continuity for these student support services, especially the DEI-focused programs and services. Although Cal Poly did not yet have a robust transfer student program, the links to their services and programs for transfer students were adequate. With the future quarter to semester conversion, the team noted the opportunity to expand Associate Degrees for Transfer and to increase the number of lower division GE and major course work articulations. Also, there was limited information on Cal Poly's graduate student population, including successes and challenges for this student cohort. (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

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

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

Cal Poly is organized around 6 colleges: the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Sciences; the College of College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences; the College of Engineering; the College of Liberal Arts (CLA); the Orfalea College of Business; the College of Science and Mathematics. These Colleges are distinct in their mission and organization. Many of the support structures, however, are centralized and offer services across the campus. The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT) provides development and enrichment opportunities for faculty and staff with a focus on teaching strategies that support Cal Poly's "Learn by Doing"; the CTLT also provides workshops and instruction to create more diverse and inclusive classrooms. (CFRs 1.4, 3.3) Other resources on campus, such as the Kennedy Library and information technology services provide the community with physical and electronic resources in support of learning and research. (CFR 3.5)

As part of the CSU system, the processes for faculty and staff hiring, recruitment, orientation, and evaluation processes are aligned with the CSU system. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) The team also saw examples of innovative strategies within the Colleges. For example, the CLA implemented a strategy around cluster hires to broaden and diversify the faculty and to expand areas for teaching and research. Following the efforts of the CLA, the cluster hire strategy was piloted in other Colleges. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)

Cal Poly also follows the CSU best practices in financial transparency, posting audited financial statements, and providing details of the budget. (CFR 3.4) The annual budget process prioritizes requests and encourages the campus to look for new ways to support students and learning. An example is the Cal Poly Scholars program to support high-achieving students who have significant financial need; the program began in the College of Engineering with a limited budget and expanded across the campus as additional funds were secured. (CFRs 3.2, 3.4, 3.7)

During the team's visit, the team witnessed a high-functioning administrative team headed by a president who has led the institution since 2011 and is the longest serving president in the CSU system. The report and the appended materials demonstrated that Cal Poly's organizational structures and decision-making processes are defined by clear roles and responsibilities. (CFRs 3.7, 3.8) The Board of Trustees for the CSU system includes 25 members with diverse qualifications to govern an institution of higher learning and exercise appropriate oversight. (CFR 3.9) The team met with the leadership and members of the faculty senate; these conversations demonstrated the shared governance of the institution and the active role that the faculty play in life of the institution. (CFR 3.10)

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

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

The team read and heard about an extensive assessment infrastructure operating at the university, college, and department levels. Team members were particularly impressed with the progress in the university's commitment to evidence-based planning in academic and student affairs. The team also noted many examples of good practices in place that demonstrate a commitment to creating a culture of evidence, such as the creation and assessment of Diversity Learning Objectives (DLOs), analysis of equity gaps, regular program reviews, and campus climate assessments. As a way for Cal Poly to continue to evaluate its efforts, the Survey of Assessment Practices and Culture (SAPC) demonstrated to the team that the university has strong cultures of assessment in some colleges and programs, with opportunities for growth, training and a more embraced assessment culture in others. (CFRs 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

The team would like to highlight, as the self-study did, the critical role that the Office of Institutional Research plays in the processes of institutional planning, data analysis, and communication. The team noted the apparent restriction and potential over-regulation of data access could impact and/or limit some faculty or administrators from properly assessing educational effectiveness. An examination of institutional research effectiveness and capacity may enable the university to enhance its ability to meet its mission and obligation to students. (CFR 4.2)

The university's external stakeholders and accrediting bodies also continue to assist Cal Poly in their commitment to quality assurance, institutional learning, and improvement. (CFR 4.5) The 2019 CPX survey, as referenced throughout the report, was also an important diversity and inclusion effort meant to support long-term institutional change. The team advises Cal Poly to expand this effort and use the findings for planning and implementing future university initiatives. (CFRs 1.4, 4.3, 4.6)

During the visit, the team was told that historically underrepresented students were disproportionately represented among students who were academically dismissed, yet the team learned that “early alert” processes that could facilitate retention were not consistently in use. Further, a mandatory first year success program, designed for students on academic probation, may occur too late to enable struggling students to reach academic success and return to good academic standing. Additional opportunities to improve quality assurance and student success could arise from: broadening the assessment focus beyond first-time first-year (FTFY) students; assessing outcomes from semester conversion through a DEI lens; assessment of course modalities (virtual vs. on campus) through a DEI lens; and regular review of academic policies through a DEI lens. It is within the institution’s control to address policies and structures that create barriers to student success. (CFRs 2.5, 2.13, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4) The team recognizes that the Cal Poly community is dedicated to positive changes that will move forward the important goals of DEI, but racist influences resist change; for example, as indicated by a member of the TPR Steering Committee: some students and parents have stated that they chose Cal Poly because it is predominately a “White” campus. The team recognizes the multiple forces resisting change and encourages campus leaders to renew their efforts for rapid changes toward a culture for justice and equity.

The team also noted the program review process does not include analysis of course DFW rates disaggregated by student characteristics. Further, the team learned of an apparent unevenness in data access and sharing across the institution. As indicated earlier in this report, Cal Poly would benefit from more widespread access to disaggregated data to enhance and guide action in their intended DEI strategic vision with emphasis on the most minoritized populations. (CFRs 1.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

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

Component 8: Institutional Specific Themes

As found in the introductory section of Cal Poly's TPR self-study, "As a public university, Cal Poly seeks to mirror the diversity and demographics of California by supporting everyone's potential to thrive in our learning community, especially historically underrepresented and marginalized individuals." In keeping with this goal to diversify the institution, Cal Poly chose a theme with three parts focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for its Thematic Program Review. Part 1 centered on the recruitment and the retention of students, staff, and faculty from historically underserved and underrepresented backgrounds; Part 2 involved the campus climate and culture; and Part 3 focused on teaching and learning in a diverse world.

In 2015, the CSU launched GI 2025 with the aim "to increase graduation rates, eliminate equity gaps and meet California's workforce needs" for all CSU campuses. The GI 2025 goals align with a top priority of the Cal Poly strategic plan to "enhance the success of all Cal Poly students." Table 8.1 (page 23 of the Cal Poly self-study) presented the 2025 graduation goals, the 2021 interim goals, and the graduation data from 2015 for first-time, first-year (FTFY) and new transfer (NTR) students.

Part 1: Recruiting and Retaining A More Diverse Community of Students, Faculty, and Staff

During the campus visit, the team was able to meet with a variety of individuals to learn more about Cal Poly's strategy in pursuit of their goals around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The team appreciated the candor and honesty of the administration, faculty, staff, and students regarding the

challenges that Cal Poly faces. (CFR 1.4) As noted in the report, Cal Poly is the least diverse campus in the CSU in terms of the racial and ethnic demographics of the student body. Cal Poly has the lowest percentage of first-generation students in the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) system. In addition, the ethnic and racial demographics of the faculty and staff are less diverse than the student body and less diverse than WSCUC peer institutions. As a result, the process of moving towards a more diverse campus that reflects the demographics of California requires leadership, communication, planning, and resources. (CFRs 1.4, 3.4, 3.6, 4.3, 4.6)

As indicated in the Cal Poly Fact Book (<https://ir.calpoly.edu/2020-factbook>), Cal Poly enrolls approximately 5,000 new first-time, first-year (FTFY) students per year, 700 to 1,000 new transfer (NTR) students, and 300-500 new graduate and post-baccalaureate students for a total population of approximately 22,000. Approximately 82% of the undergraduate students are from California, 2% are international students, and the remaining students are from other states with the largest fraction from Washington, Colorado, and Oregon. In terms of the ethnic/racial diversity, 53% are white, 19% are Hispanic, 14% are Asian American, 8% are multiracial, 0.7% are Black/African American, 0.1% Native American/Alaska Native, and 0.2% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; the racial identity of the remaining population is unknown. As noted earlier, Cal Poly uses the designation of underrepresented minority (URM) to include students who self-report their race/ethnicity as Hispanic, Native American/Alaska Native, Black/African American, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, plus students who indicate two or more races and include at least one of these groups. For 2021, the percentage of undergraduate students in this URM grouping was 22.4% up from 21.7% in 2020 and 21.1% in 2019; for graduate students, the percentage was 20.6%. For incoming transfer students, 37% self-identified as a URM student. Regarding socio-economic diversity, the percentage of Pell grant students has fallen to 18% from a recent peak of around 20%; there has also been a recent decline in the percentage of students receiving federal loans.

These statistics speak to the challenges facing Cal Poly. The review team encourages attention to a comprehensive enrollment management strategy with a focus on how the removal of the SAT/ACT and the conversion to semesters will impact its admission and enrollment processes as well as its DEI goals. (CFR 1.4)

Cal Poly regularly generates and makes public data that demonstrates students make timely progress to the completion of their degrees. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10) As shown in Cal Poly's self-study (Table 8.1), Cal Poly's 6-year FTFY graduation rates have steadily increased from 79% in 2015, plateauing around 82% between 2016 and 2020, and then rising to a record high of 85% in 2021. The increase in graduation rates have been accompanied by a decrease in the FTFY graduation gap for both Pell grant students (5% gap in 2021) and URM students (6% gap in 2021) as compared with prior years (Table 8.2). For NTR students, the 4-year 2021 graduation rate was 85%, which was the lowest in recent years (prior years averaged around 88%); the global pandemic may have contributed to this drop.

As indicated in the self-study report, Cal Poly's 6-year graduation rates of undergraduates exceed those of other CSU campuses and are comparable with several of the campuses of the University of California, such as Santa Barbara (85%) and Irvine (86%), and slightly below campuses such as Davis (87%), and San Diego (90%). The strong graduation rates are commendable, and the team learned they are a point of pride for the Cal Poly campus. (CFR 2.10)

Graduation data disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender were found to be readily available on the Cal Poly institutional research site (<https://ir.calpoly.edu/cal-poly-2021-data-dashboards>) and on the Key Indicators Dashboard (KID) from WSCUC. An examination of the KID data (most recent year available is 2020) indicated graduation rates for Hispanic students have shown a steady increase, rising from 70% in 2016 to 78% in 2020. The graduation rates for other groups varied, reflecting the small sample sizes. From 2016 to 2020, the average 6-year graduation rate for Black/African American

students was 68%, for Native American/Alaskan Native students the average was 81%, and for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander the rate was 67%. The graduation rates for transfer students by demographic groups were not available in the data submitted. Although the total number of students in some these demographic groups was small, to develop a more complete understanding of student success, the team also suggests that disaggregated data be further examined to better identify and understand barriers that might be specific to different majors and colleges. (CFR 2.10)

As a note, the team learned that the Cal Poly institutional research site reports graduation rates using different methodologies from the standard IPEDs and WSCUC's new KID calculations. The resulting numbers from the different methods of calculation vary from each other. Cal Poly calculates the numbers of graduates in a year starting July 1; the Cal Poly institutional research site uses an academic year, which includes data from the students completing their degrees in the summer. We commend Cal Poly for evaluating their graduation rate data using various calculating methods and recommend that more descriptive explanations be developed to demonstrate how these different reporting methods provide essential differential data used in planning and assessment. Extra care is recommended in describing the methods to avoid any potential ambiguity in reporting. (CFR 2.10)

As previously noted, the overall Cal Poly graduation rates are the highest in the CSU system. However, the FTFY graduation rate is below the CSU GI 2025 interim target of 88% and the 2025 target of 92%. The recent 4-year completion rates for transfer students (at 85%) are also below the GI 2025 interim and 2025 goals (89% and 93%, respectively). During the campus visit, the team heard from faculty and staff members that they believe Cal Poly will not reach the FTFY and NTR graduation targets or eliminate the graduation gaps as set by the CSU in GI 2025. Faculty and staff members provided several reasons, including the need for increased scholarship funding, improved advising, and changes in

the data and methodologies provided to faculty to improve student success. (CFRs 2.10, 2.14) These issues are explored further in subsequent sections of this report.

A key strategy for Cal Poly in recent years was to focus on recruiting, attracting, and retaining more low-income students. One program used to address this goal has been the Cal Poly Scholars program, which began in 2012 with 14 students in the College of Engineering. The program expanded to all colleges and reached 1,400 Scholars for 2021 with a projected increase to 2,900 Scholars in 2023. Cal Poly Scholars are high-achieving California residents with the greatest financial need. The program provides fees, academic and community support and first- and second-year Scholars are required to reside in the designated Year 1 and Year 2 Scholars residential learning communities. All students in the program take a one-credit course in their first quarter, which is designed to help them navigate their college experience. The team met with a small group of Cal Poly Scholars and the supporting staff. The team was impressed by their feedback of the program with students indicating that the program provided a key incentive for them to attend Cal Poly. Both students and staff indicated that they would like to see an increase in funding for the Scholars to provide support beyond fees and housing beyond the first two years. (CFR 2.13)

To generate additional funding for the Cal Poly Scholars, the institution introduced in 2019 the Cal Poly Opportunity Fee, which increased fees on non-resident students. For 2022, the non-resident fee was approximately \$8,000. The revenue from these fees partially supports the Cal Poly Scholars program and other campus needs, including student services and funding for new faculty hires. The team suggests Cal Poly ensure this funding source will be sufficient and sustainable, especially given the planned expansion of the Scholars program. (CFRs 2.13, 3.4)

The team also learned that Cal Poly has increased the number of partner high schools from which it actively recruits students. The Partner School program identified 520 California high schools that

serve first-generation or economically-disadvantaged students and families. The number of students applying from the Partner Schools has increased, and the selection rate for these students (45% in 2021) exceeds the overall selection rate (33%). As reported to the team during the visit, because of competition from better resourced universities, the yield rate for students applying from these schools (23% in 2021) is lower than the overall yield rate (27%). Although the institution indicated it is focused on increasing tuition assistance for these students, Cal Poly remains the most expensive public university in California for the neediest students. The team feels that building off the Cal Poly Scholars program to attract and support low-income students is critical for Cal Poly to be successful in its long-term goals. (CFR 1.4)

In addition to increasing financial support for students, Cal Poly reported exploring a range of retention initiatives. The TPR self-study report outlined efforts around academic preparation, enrollment management, student engagement and wellbeing, data-informed decision making, and the elimination of administrative barriers. One such effort was the opening in 2019 of the Office of Writing and Learning Initiatives (OWLI), which provides peer-to-peer tutoring, supplemental workshops, study sessions, and other academic resources and support. (CFR 2.13) Another new office was the Transfer Center, which opened in 2020, and aims to help transition, connect, and integrate transfer students into the Cal Poly community. (CFR 2.14) The team learned that Cal Poly has also focused on data analysis, such as the 2017-18 study of “active not enrolled” students, that looked at more than 900 students and contacted approximately 700 students who were active in the program but not enrolled in any units. The results of this effort provided ways to support at-risk students, to identify systems that contributed to unnecessary student attrition, and to improve academic advising. The “Active Not Enrolled and Informal Time Off” project is carried out quarterly by University Advising / Retention staff. This project serves as the basis of a regular and focused advising effort. (CFRs 2.11, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

Additionally, the report described several data-driven enrollment management efforts and noted that “this should be a focus of future advising and retention work.” The team agreed with this statement and encouraged Cal Poly to evaluate and assess the range of new programs and efforts that have been introduced in the past five years. The lessons learned from the “active not enrolled” project should also be evaluated and used for planning. (CFR 2.11, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

Regarding transfer students, the self-study report also suggested that improving the two-year transfer graduation rate is difficult because of Cal Poly’s “learn by doing” philosophy. Students entering Cal Poly as first-time freshman must declare a major upon entry and begin taking courses in that major during the first term. As a result, students who transfer as juniors are typically behind in the coursework associated with the major, compared with students who completed the first two years at Cal Poly. The team encourages Cal Poly to continue to examine ways to improve transfer student success such as working with partner institutions to prepare students for transfer into Cal Poly. (CFR 2.14)

The team was not provided with disaggregated transfer student data in the initial report, and therefore was not able to evaluate transfer student activity with regard to ensuring equitable treatment and examining the potential for impact on stated DEI goals. The review team encourages Cal Poly to revisit the stated “unintended consequences” of a system of fees that were intended to support Learn by Doing (Cal Poly TPR self-study, page 60) but that may have made the institution financially inaccessible to many families and created a barrier for minoritized citizens. (CFR 2.14)

As indicated earlier, faculty and staff indicated that improvements to advising could help Cal Poly to reach their GI 2025 goals, including closing achievement gaps. Such improvements could include development of a comprehensive philosophy around advising, coordination of advising campus-wide, and implementation of strategies that contribute to success of racialized minorities on predominantly white college campuses. (CFRs 1.4, 2.13)

From data provided to the team (Appendices 8-3 and 8-4), the team learned staff and senior management at Cal Poly continue to be predominantly white. Of the staff, 65% in 2020 were non-Hispanic white, which is down slightly from 2016; the percentage of Hispanic/Latinx staff has increased modestly over the same four-year period. As a note, the total number of staff members decreased by nearly 100 FTE between 2020 and 2016. During the visit, the team heard about a continued increase in staff departures during the time of the pandemic. The team also heard about the challenges regarding compensation, especially with the increasing costs of housing in the San Luis Obispo area. Recent structures and practices show promise for diversifying staff at Cal Poly. Of note, the requirements that all job postings include a diversity statement; that every candidate is asked to articulate their contributions to diversity; that an “Employment Equity Facilitator” is assigned to each search; and that rubrics are required for every search, are all proven strategies for increasing diversity. Since these interventions are recent, assessment of each strategy will be important. The institution would benefit from a strategic staff recruitment plan that considers diversifying applicant pools (beyond the immediate community that is not racially diverse); examines the role of campus climate in recruitment and retention; and considers ways to acknowledge and reward employees for their dedication to their jobs and to the institution. Nevertheless, the team notes there are important differences in approaches to recruiting and retaining faculty and staff. The discussion of progress in diversifying the faculty would have been clearer with attention to these distinctions. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)

Cal Poly’s self-study indicated that the university has employees with white men in the majority overall, in full professors, and in academic leadership. While the report noted in regard to faculty that “the last four years show promising movement in the direction of more female, URM, and Asian representation, although the time span is too brief to guarantee significant change over the next decade”, the data in Appendix 8-3 indicated little change in faculty with 80% in 2016 and 77% in 2020

identifying as non-Hispanic white. Further, the total faculty were 41% women and 59% men in 2020, which was unchanged from 2016. There was little discussion regarding why these patterns have been so stable and how the institution plans to radically re-envision its approach to faculty diversity in order to show appreciable progress. To a large extent, the racial demographics of the staff (65% non-Hispanic white) and of management (77% non-Hispanic white) have been unchanged from 2016 to 2020. While it may be available, the team did not have the faculty demographics and associated analysis among the six colleges. (CFRs 1.4, 3.1)

In terms of faculty recruitment, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) piloted a DEI-focused cluster-hire program in 2016-17, which yielded a 7 faculty hires in 5 departments. A subsequent effort was made campus-wide, which included an additional 5 hires in CLA, 5 in the College of Science and Mathematics, and 1 each in the Colleges of Engineering, Business, and Architecture. The CLA is pursuing a third round of cluster hires this academic year. The university is commended for this recent adoption of cluster hires, which is a proven intervention at other institutions. The team urges the campus to thoroughly assess this particular effort, because at present, there are potential concerns. Of the hires to date, a plurality (32%) were white, and the majority of new hires (18/31) were in one college (CLA).

The team appreciates the creativity of the cluster hire program. It commends the university for providing the \$10,000 start-up funds for each new faculty hire that supports their DEI research and develops plans in collaboration with their school deans to utilize these funds to contribute to university DEI goals. Since this program is new and innovative, the team encourages Cal Poly to carefully document the outcome of this initiative and establish assessment measures that ensure the success of the faculty involved and address the total burden placed on these faculty who carry a heavy load of responsibility for DEI success. (CFR 3.1)

The campus's participation in NSF's "Aspire: The National Alliance for Inclusive & Diverse STEM Faculty" is also promising. This three-year institutional change effort will likely lead to ongoing self-reflection, improved presence of diverse faculty, and inclusive teaching practices. Lessons may be applicable and scalable across the institution. In addition, use of the "Cal Poly Opportunity Fee" to support faculty hiring with an emphasis on diversity (Cal Poly self-study, page 28), the ongoing assessment and improvement of campus climate, and the presence of diversity committees in every college all have the potential to aid in faculty recruitment and retention. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

The review team was pleased to learn that each college has identified at least one person for whom advancing college DEI-related initiatives is a central focus. However, it was unclear whether or not these individuals applied for these positions, were appointed based on their knowledge, skills, and ability to perform the job, or if they are compensated for this important work. With the exception of the College of Liberal Arts, it appeared as though there had been minimal consideration of the process for appointing these individuals, little transparency regarding their job responsibilities (beyond a title change), and no information regarding how their impact would be assessed. This approach has the potential to be successful especially since these individuals meet regularly as a "community of practice" creating the opportunity to share best practices, but the process of introducing this structure was a source of concern for members of the campus and the reviewers. (CFRs 1.4, 3.2)

Overall, the team strongly encourages Cal Poly to accelerate the diversification of their faculty and management ranks. The faculty serve as role models for students, and they can set the tone, climate, and direction of a campus. At the current rate that Cal Poly faculty demographics are changing, it may take several decades for Cal Poly to have a similar demographic distribution as the state it serves. There is a need to create a common language, shared understanding, shared commitment, shared

expectations, and ongoing accountability to enhance the campus's capacity to achieve its goals for a more diverse and inclusive campus community. (CFRs 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

Part 2: Campus Climate and the Development of a Campus Culture That Is Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive

Cal Poly's identification of "Campus Climate and the Development of a Campus Culture That is Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive" as a part of their TPR theme and an aspirational goal is commendable, especially since they note that it has been a longstanding, intractable issue. It is admirable that the campus chose to embrace this challenging task. As noted earlier in this report, campus community members—faculty, students, staff, and administrators—consistently described Cal Poly as "the whitest university" in the CSU system, and the campus provided data that indicates that its faculty and staff have been predominantly white for decades. (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 4.3) As stated, the team applauds Cal Poly for recognizing its historic diversity challenges and seeks to understand the previously unexamined ways that whiteness has shaped its systems, policies, and practices, and is deeply embedded within layers of its culture. An example of this can be observed in the analysis of the 2014 campus-wide climate survey where results noted overall perceptions of campus climate as mainly positive. However, racial and ethnic minorities "were more likely to report experiencing exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile feedback based on their race or ethnicity compared to Multiracial (29%) and white students (8%)" (Cal Poly self-study, pages 40-41). Also as noted in the self-study, both the 2014 survey and a 2019 climate survey further indicated consistent dissatisfaction with campus climate by certain groups when results were disaggregated by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, enrollment status, gender, sexual orientation, and ability status of the respondent. The university acknowledged that a comprehensive, routine, and rigorous campus climate improvement plan was necessary. The review team urges the institution to undertake this crucial work. (CFR 1.4) The institution also does not yet routinely track

trends of reported bias or negative behavior (e.g., type, location, frequency, “hot spots,” etc.) that would inform prevention and education and education protocols. It was shared with the team that the university had plans to implement such a system in the near future through a proposed fellowship program. It will be important to review these data alongside the results of various campus climate surveys in order to design a holistic education, prevention, and intervention strategy that addresses the needs of each population with specificity. (CFRs 1.4, 4.3, 4.7)

The presence of various Campus Resource Centers to help promote a sense of belonging is a best practice in higher education, and such centers have also been utilized at Cal Poly. However, it was reported that these Centers were understaffed, typically comprised of a single professional staff member, and therefore that they have been unable to reach their full potential in serving and supporting all Cal Poly students. The team also noted a lack of attention to the experiences of graduate students. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.13)

The campus climate for faculty and staff was a concern during the site visit. University employees (faculty, staff, and administrators) reported that they were exhausted, overworked, undercompensated, and that they were deeply concerned about the high attrition of employees. It is important to note that having endured COVID-19-related crises, attrition across many higher education institutions is a widespread issue. Nevertheless, the team viewed the current level of attrition as a serious concern that may threaten institutional effectiveness and should be examined for root causes. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)

Part 3: Teaching and Learning How to Live and Work in a Diverse World

Cal Poly recognized the critical and challenging need to provide their students with meaningful DEI teaching and learning experiences for living and working in a diverse world through students’ coursework and co-curricular opportunities. Cal Poly created Diversity Learning Outcomes (DLOs) in

2008 to accompany its University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) along with the required United States Cultural Pluralism (USCP) requirement (undergraduates only). The campus indicated their commitment to further build capacity for DEI understanding and outcomes, noting that they were re-establishing connections and gaining momentum after the COVID shutdown. (CFRs 1.4, 2.2, 2.2a, 2.4)

The team learned of a campus-wide culture of learning outcomes assessment involving Academic and Student Affairs, program review, and institutional Diversity Learning Outcomes. However, the assessment outcomes for improvement and transformation of DEI programs and activities appeared to be lacking. Also, it was not clear how graduate programs met the DLOs in their degree programs. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4)

The new CSU GE Area F requirement in ethnic studies began with the incoming fall 2021 freshmen cohort. This new requirement may provide an opportunity for GE learning outcomes to align with the DLOs and ULOs. Although the team recognized that there have been statewide and CSU initiatives that have influenced Cal Poly's assessment efforts, the team also noted that Cal Poly needed to strengthen the assessment cycle ("closing the loop") for their DEI efforts across the campus in both academic and co-curricular programs. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2a, 2.3)

Given that each college has identified one associate dean who is responsible in advancing DEI efforts within a college, the team was hopeful that DLOs and other DEI college efforts will undergo a timely program assessment cycle for continuous improvement of DEI efforts in the colleges. Other college-based DEI efforts discussed in the self-study were noted and provide the opportunity for adapting and adopting proven practices in other colleges. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 3.10)

The Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) provides DEI resources to faculty for creating an inclusive classroom learning environment. These resources include workshops, expansion of

the Teaching for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (TIDE) program, as well as equity and inclusion strategies in a virtual classroom. The team recognized that CTLT's contributions to Cal Poly's DEI efforts were critical in further fostering this TPR subtheme. The team suggests that future assessments focus on how CTLT's DEI efforts have impacted classroom environments and student learning. (CFRs 2.11, 3.3)

The team learned that Cal Poly Scholars is a student-centered, university-wide program that provides high achieving undergraduates from low-income backgrounds with the holistic, "wrap around" services and support to be successful at Cal Poly. Many Cal Poly Scholars had high praise for this program, and their comments clearly supported that this program did provide a "sense of belonging" to the campus as well as support them to excel academically at Cal Poly. Students noted that the many events and workshops helped them to feel comfortable at Cal Poly as well as to interact with other peers who look like them – one Cal Poly Scholar commented that "seeing people who look like her brings her joy". (CFRs 2.5, 2.11)

Student research projects such as the BEACoN Scholars and college-based research opportunities provided exemplary outcomes for this theme. The faculty mentors for the DEI-centered research projects partnered with their students to support DEI research opportunities. The students' enthusiasm for their contributions to the campus' DEI efforts was commendable, and the team applauded the faculty for providing these award-winning opportunities. The team was hopeful that both the BEACoN Scholars and college-based research opportunities (especially summer opportunities) could be expanded equitably, and more assessment could be completed to demonstrate the impact of these programs. Staff and faculty associated with these programs spoke of the need to strengthen the infrastructure for these programs and to provide equitable student summer stipends. Students in these programs indicated that Cal Poly needed to provide more intentional DEI programs and activities and recommended that faculty increase the number of DEI examples in their courses. (CFRs 2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11)

The team felt that Cal Poly has great potential for coordinating and prioritizing their curricular and co-curricular efforts to provide meaningful DEI programs and experiences for all students. A strong and scaffolded assessment cycle of these DEI efforts will serve to continuously improve teaching and learning for their students about how to live and work in a diverse world. (CFRs 1.4, 2.4, 2.5, 2.11)

IID. Component 9: Reflection and Plans for Improvement

Component nine provided both reflection and plans for the future. The section reminded the reader of more than 120 years of Cal Poly's history of achievements and commitment to the citizens of California. The university is recognized for its curricular and student successes and is considered one of the leading polytechnic institutions in the nation. The campus is known for its successful graduation rates, hands-on learning, and academic innovations. WSCUC recognized Cal Poly's accreditation standing by inviting the institution to participate in the TPR process, an invitation to institutions that have repeatedly demonstrated the highest accreditation standards.

Cal Poly's educational purpose has been and continues to be focused on serving Californians' needs in workforce development, focusing on learning by doing, contributing to the public greater good, and a longstanding focus on justice. At the same time, the university's mission has always been to serve California's diverse population's educational and skills needs. Diversity and inclusion goals on the campus have been hard to achieve, particularly among faculty. The recent concerted focus on DEI has seen gains within the diversity of the student population, but across campus, challenges to DEI are still prevalent. (CFR 1.4)

Throughout the Cal Poly TPR document and the team's comments, it has been stated that the campus has been one of the least diverse institutions in the CSU system. Several reasons have been suggested. Often cited as probable causes are the following: the university's location away from major population centers, situated in a relatively isolated coastal community with limited industries; fewer jobs

in specific sectors of the economy; the “whiteness” of the local and regional culture; high cost of education; transfer credit issues; and the cost of housing. These suspected reasons will require further study and deeper analysis to inform needed remediation. (CFRs 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

DEI efforts in the last few years have demonstrated a campus commitment to enhancing levels of equity, which were evidenced by the many programs established and described in Component eight. During the visit, students, faculty, staff, and administration reported being deeply committed to making fundamental and durable changes in the culture and DEI reputation of Cal Poly. The actions undertaken were not perceived merely as a response to external systems pressure from the California State University’s Graduation Initiative 2025 and WSCUC recommendations, but rather inherent to the campus's commitment to the future. (CFRs 1.4, 4.6, 4.7)

Cal Poly has been transparent and bold in recognizing the residual racism within the university and the region. The administration is committed to improving and changing the assessment of undergraduate learning while promoting diversity and inclusive excellence. This institutional report, which reflected the multi-year self-study process, demonstrated that the university has been faithful to this charge. The team has noted and appreciates the bold decision by Cal Poly to select DEI as their TPR theme. Other topics would have been less complicated and less controversial to pursue. This self-study boldly joins similar conversations throughout higher education.

Component eight cataloged many initiatives moving the campus to greater diversity, inclusion, and equity. The team recognizes the campus's challenge in coordinating and sustaining the many varied projects on campus. Adequate funding and supplying the workforce necessary to maintain and further develop these initiatives are greatly needed. New levels of cooperation and coordination among faculty, staff, student organizations, and student services must be further envisioned. (CFRs 1.4, 4.6, 4.7)

Two programs of significance that have enormous potential to achieve new levels of diversity and equity are the Partner Schools initiative for scores of high schools in the nation whose student bodies meet DEI and economic criteria and the very successful Cal Poly Scholars program that is intended to create pathways for a more diverse group of students to reach Cal Poly and provide ongoing support.

Resources including support for faculty, staff, and students will continue to be a needed focus of the new College Based Fee, a plan that will direct at least 60% of funding into direct financial aid and scholarships in order to lower the net cost of attendance for lower-income California students while using the remainder to fund Cal Poly's high-investment comprehensive polytechnic (and statewide) mission. Team interviews with Cal Poly faculty, staff, and students indicated great excitement for the proposed increase for DEI projects but also a level of misapprehension by students about the impact of the additional fees. Additional campus understanding of the proposed fees will benefit the Cal Poly community. (CFR 3.4)

The team recognizes the creativity and value of the "cluster" hiring projects and recommends that further assessment of the success factors for this initiative will inform the importance of other cluster hiring in more colleges.

Much of Cal Poly's focus on future DEI success appears to be tied to anticipated curricular changes required for the campus to move successfully from quarter to semester schedules. This move will provide a substantive opportunity for curricular realignment with DEI goals. Curricular changes that will help transfer students and delivery of GE courses that are DEI enriched will offer additional opportunities to address challenges to equity issues. (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 2.14) Such curricular enhancement depends on faculty commitment and the need to train faculty for general education courses and within the primary major to integrate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in a profession and within society. Cal Poly's contribution to the future of DEI on campus and throughout society will depend

greatly on the success of faculty development efforts to instill issues of equity and justice into the curriculum and are modeled by all Cal Poly Community. (CFRs 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

SECTION III – COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW

Commendations

1. The team commends Cal Poly for undertaking the TPR and selecting themes focused on diversity, equity, inclusion and access, a challenging approach that has helped to solidify the institution's collective commitment to these issues.
2. As a team, we acknowledge the passion and dedication of Cal Poly students to advocate and articulate their DEI vision and experience; we appreciate the support provided by faculty and staff.
3. We commend the campus leadership for their renewed engagement with local city, community, and alumni to develop jobs and businesses that promote acceptance and appreciation for diversity and to value inclusion and equity.
4. We commend the DEI student-centered programs such as the Cal Poly Scholars and faculty-mentored DEI student research projects (for example the BEACoN Scholars Programs and other college-based research opportunities).
5. The Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) is noted as an institutional strength. It is also clear that they are a key contributor to transforming the culture of teaching and learning at Cal Poly in support of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
6. We commend the campus wide culture of learning outcomes assessment as evident in intentional bridge building between Student and Academic Affairs, Program Review and institutional Diversity Learning Outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Working with all campus wide constituents, strengthen Cal Poly's aspirational and inspirational DEI vision, with an emphasis on anti-racism. (CFR 1.4)
2. Further integrate a cohesive, clearly communicated, data informed DEI plan that includes and prioritizes the most minoritized campus community members and includes metrics beyond graduation and retention rates. (CFRs 1.4, 2.10 and 3.1)
3. Reestablish connections with campus stakeholders with particular attention to unifying and strengthening the partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to regain momentum in executing this DEI plan. (CFRs 1.4 and 2.11)
4. Develop an institutional set of values, principles, and procedures to inform and guide appropriate access to disaggregated data in order to critically evaluate and refine its DEI initiatives in support of student success. (CFRs 2.11 and 4.2)
5. Develop and implement a multi-pronged, integrated strategy that continuously gauges and improves campus climate and the Cal Poly community's sense of belonging. (CFR 2.10)
6. Accelerate the processes for diversifying faculty and staff hires with attention to attrition, retention, and compensation. (CFRs 1.4, 3.1 and 3.2)
7. Address the critical need to ensure necessary staff capacity, training and expertise to provide continuity to student services needed to support and enhance DEI. (CFRs 1.4, 2.13 and 3.3)

APPENDIX – FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FORMS

Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's transfer credit policy and practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	<p>Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, where is the policy located? "The Credit Hour," Academic Programs and Planning, https://academicprograms.calpoly.edu/content/academicpolicies/policies-courses/carnegie-unit</p> <p>Comments: Every term, the Registrar's Office conducts a "contact hours edit" to check and reconcile the credit and contact hours. For Cal Poly's online classes, contact hours are entered into their PeopleSoft system. The contact hours depend on the modality of the class. If the modality is fully asynchronous, the number of weekly contact hours are entered into a specific field in PS which is separate than the traditional contact hours field called "by arrangement" which equals the credit hours of the course. If the class has a hybrid modality, contact hours display the synchronous or the in-person hours and the "by arrangement" field lists the rest of the contact hours.</p>
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO.</p> <p>Comments: The application of this policy across the institution, to ensure that credit hour assignments are accurate, reliable, appropriate to the degree level, and conforming to commonly accepted practice in higher education, is assured by the following existing review processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the New Course Proposal form, which, in order to maintain accreditation standards and quality curricular control, asks the proposer to specify the number of hours of face-to-face or synchronous/asynchronous instruction, and the number of hours of out-of-class work; the curricular review process as supervised by the faculty, in which the approval of any course includes evaluation by the department, college, and Academic Senate curriculum committees of the course credit hours assigned; the course scheduling process as instituted quarterly by the Office of the Registrar, which specifically checks and confirms the correspondence between credit hour assignment and class meeting times.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	<p>Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO.</p> <p>Comments: Quarterly course schedules are posted (but only available via on-campus login or VPN login) at: https://schedules.calpoly.edu/</p>
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 27</p> <p>What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Both</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Aerospace Engineering; Animal Science; Biology; Biomedical Engineering; Business; Chemistry; City & Regional Planning; Economics; Graphic Communication; History; Industrial Technology & Packaging; Kinesiology; Political Science; Psychology; Statistics; Theatre; Weed Biology & Management;</p> <p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO.</p> <p>Comments: Most appear to meet the equivalent amount of work to the prescribe hours—some were difficult to determine by observation due to the online components, but the Registrar's Office has a process as noted above for determining the credit hours.</p>
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 8</p> <p>What kinds of courses? Laboratories; Senior projects;</p>

of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Aerospace Engineering; Biology; Biomedical Engineering; Chemistry; Economics; Food Science & Nutrition; Kinesiology; Weed biology & management;
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Cal Poly is very strong with their hands-on curriculum for laboratories and projects, emphasizing their "learn by doing" motto.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 9
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? BA/BS/MA/MS
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Aerospace Engineering; City & Regional Planning; Construction Management; Economics; History; Statistics
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Satisfactory

Review Completed By: Maureen Scharberg
Date: May 1, 2022

Marketing and Recruitment Review Form

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

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

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

students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Melany Hunt

Date: 4/28/2022

Student Complaints Form

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where?
	Comments: Very clearly articulated and user-friendly https://crco.calpoly.edu/content/complaints_action_guidelines
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, please describe briefly: Yes. Thoroughly explained during the campus visit.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Clear procedures are in place. There are separate procedures based on the type of student complaint.
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? ✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where?
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <input type="checkbox"/> YES ✓ NO If so, please describe briefly:
	Comments: According to meeting participants, the institution does not yet routinely track trends of reported behavior (e.g. type, location, frequency) that would inform prevention and education and education protocols. The Interim Chief Diversity Officer shared that she had plans to implement such a system in the future.

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: **Becky R. Petitt**

Date: April 29, 2022

Transfer Credit Review Form

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's transfer credit policy and practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Is the policy publically available? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? https://www.calpoly.edu/admissions/transfer-student/selection-criteria
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

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

(1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and

(2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WSCUC Senior College and University Commission's Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By:

Date: Melany Hunt 5/5/2022