

Interim Report Form

Please respond to each question. Do not delete the questions. Insert additional pages as needed.

Name of Institution: California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

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Accreditation Liaison Officer
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Report Submission Date: February 27th, 2015

Statement on Report Preparation

Briefly describe in narrative form the process of report preparation, providing the names and titles of those involved. Because of the focused nature of an Interim Report, the widespread and comprehensive involvement of all institutional constituencies is not normally required. Faculty, administrative staff, and others should be involved as appropriate to the topics being addressed in the preparation of the report. Campus constituencies, such as faculty leadership and, where appropriate, the governing board, should review the report before it is submitted to WSCUC, and such reviews should be indicated in this statement.

The principal authors of this report were Mary Pedersen, Vice Provost, Academic Programs and Planning; Annie Holmes; Executive Director, University Diversity and Inclusivity; and Bruno Giberti, Professor, Architecture, and Faculty Coordinator, Academic Programs.

The following individuals made significant contributions: Beth Chance, Professor, Statistics Department; Rachel Fernflores, Associate Professor, Philosophy Department, and Faculty Fellow, President's Office; Brenda Helmbrecht, Associate Professor and Director of Writing, English Department; Debra Valencia-Laver, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts.

Significant support was provided by two student assistants: Jessica Engdahl, Single Subject Teaching Credential Program in Biology, School of Education; Alisha McGoldrick, Program in Business Administration, Orfalea College of Business.

Pertinent sections of the report were presented to associate deans and college advisors, as well as to the following groups: Academic Assessment Council; Academic Deans Council; Academic Senate and Executive Committee; Associate Students Incorporated, Board of Directors; and Inclusive Excellence Council. The ensuing discussions proved extremely valuable in testing the draft's development.

The final draft was shared with members of the same groups, who contributed additional comments. Kathleen Enz-Finken, Provost and Executive Vice President, and Jeff Armstrong, President, both reviewed and approved the report before its submission to WASC.

List of Topics Addressed in this Report

Please list the topics identified in the action letter(s) and that are addressed in this report.

At its meeting on June 13-15, 2012, the WASC Commission acted to receive Cal Poly's Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) report and reaffirm the university's accreditation; schedule the next comprehensive review; and request an interim report in spring 2015 on two main issues: progress in addressing diversity, including the diversity of the faculty, staff, and students, the campus climate, and the effectiveness of various initiatives to support diversity and achievement of underrepresented students; and an update on the assessment of undergraduate learning outcomes.

As identified by the WASC Commission, these issues form the basis of this interim report:

A. Progress in Addressing Diversity and Inclusive Excellence

1. Leadership on Diversity
2. Diversity and Recruitment
3. Diversity, Learning, and Student Success
4. Campus Climate
5. Action Plan

B. Update on the Assessment of Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

1. Leadership on Assessment
2. University/GE Assessment of Critical Thinking
3. Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)
4. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
5. Action Plan

Institutional Context

Very briefly describe the institution's background; mission; history, including the founding date and year first accredited; geographic locations; and other pertinent information so that the Interim Report Committee panel has the context to understand the issues discussed in the report.

Location. California Polytechnic State University, usually referred to as Cal Poly, is located next to the city of San Luis Obispo — 10 miles from the Pacific Ocean and about halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

With a total of 9,678 acres, Cal Poly is the second largest land-holding university in California and one of the largest in the nation. In addition to the main campus of 1,321 acres, the university owns the San Luis Creek Ranches (adjacent to the campus), Western Ranches (in the area but not adjacent), Swanton Pacific Ranch, and Valencia Property (both in Santa Cruz County). The university uses all of these holdings to provide students with opportunities for Learn by Doing, which has been the cornerstone of a Cal Poly education since its inception.¹

Mission. Cal Poly is a distinctive part of the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system. As such, it shares in the system's broad mission, while having a unique identity that is defined in state law. This specifically authorizes Cal Poly (and its sister campus in Pomona) "to emphasize the applied fields of agriculture, engineering, business, home economics, and other occupational and professional fields."² Architecture is also a field unique to Cal Poly and its sister campus.

Cal Poly's own mission statement is as follows:

Cal Poly fosters teaching, scholarship, and service in a Learn by Doing environment in which students, staff, and faculty are partners in discovery. 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.

The university's vision statement is as follows:

Cal Poly will be the nation's premier comprehensive polytechnic university, an innovative institution that develops and inspires whole-system thinkers to serve California and help solve global challenges.

Identity. The idea of Cal Poly as a comprehensive polytechnic is a relatively new one that reflects the language of the mission and accounts for the unique collection of majors that have developed in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences (CAFES), College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED), Orfalea College of Business

¹ "Cal Poly Quick Facts," webpage, <http://calpolynews.calpoly.edu/quickfacts.html>, consulted 12 February 2015.

² State of California, Education Code, section 90404.

(OCOB), College of Engineering (CENG), College of Liberal Arts (CLA), and College of Science and Math (COSAM). The programs offered by these six colleges include 64 undergraduate degrees, 75 minors, 13 credentials, and 32 master degrees.³

Another important aspect of Cal Poly is its identity as a primarily undergraduate institution and a residential campus. In Fall 2014, the university enrolled 20,186 students. Of these, 19,246 (95.3%) were undergraduate, 143 (0.7%) were post-baccalaureate, and 797 (3.9%) were graduate students. During the same term, 36.7% of undergraduates lived in university housing; almost all the first-time freshmen — 98.3% — lived on campus, as did 31.8% of sophomores.⁴

Selectivity. Applications to Cal Poly continue to climb, with 53,120 total undergraduate applicants in Fall 2014 — an increase of 6.6% from the previous year. First-time freshman (FTF) applications totaled 43,812 — an increase of 8.4% from the previous year — of which 13,533 (30.9%) were offered admission and 4,662 (34%) were enrolled full time.

As a result, FTF form a very select group, with record-high GPA, SAT, and ACT averages for the Fall 2014 cohort. The average high school GPA was 3.88; the average SAT reading and math scores were 599 and 635, respectively; and the average ACT composite score was 27.5.⁵

History. Cal Poly was founded in 1901 as a co-educational vocational high school — the California Polytechnic School — but the first class of 15 women and men was not enrolled until 1903. Legislation limiting enrollment to men only was passed in 1929, and women students were not admitted again until 1956.

In 1940, the State Board of Education authorized the granting of Bachelor of Science degrees and changed Cal Poly from a school to a college. It officially became a university in 1972. The first degrees were granted to 24 men in June 1942. The senior project, a capstone requirement for all Cal Poly undergraduates, has been a distinctive component of the university's education since this time.⁶

Accreditation. Since 1951, Cal Poly has been fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). After the last site visit in Spring 2012, the WASC Commission reaffirmed the university's accreditation for the maximum period of ten years, while requesting an interim progress report in 2015 and scheduling the next comprehensive review for 2022.⁷

³ Cal Poly, "Quick Facts"; Cal Poly, Institutional Research, "PolyView," Fall 2014, 1 and 3,

http://content---calpoly---edu.s3.amazonaws.com/ir/1/publications_reports/polyview/pv14.pdf.

⁴ Cal Poly, Institutional Research, "PolyView," Fall 2014, 1 and 3.

⁵ Institutional Research, "PolyView," 1; Cal Poly, Common Data Set 2014t 2015, 1, 5.

⁶ Institutional Research, "Fact Book," Fall 2013, 1; Cal Poly, "Our Polytechnic Identity in the 21st Century," WASC Educational Effectiveness Review Report, January 2012, 11.

⁷ Institutional Research, "Fact Book," 3. Page 4 of 49

Response to Issues Identified by the Commission

This main section of the report should address the issues identified by the Commission in its action letter(s) as topics for the Interim Report. Each topic identified in the Commission's action letter should be addressed. The team report (on which the action letter is based) may provide additional context and background for the institution's understanding of issues.

Provide a full description of each issue, the actions taken by the institution that address this issue, and an analysis of the effectiveness of these actions to date. Have the actions taken been successful in resolving the problem? What is the evidence supporting progress? What further problems or issues remain? How will these concerns be addressed, by whom, and under what timetable? How will the institution know when the issue has been fully addressed? Please include a timeline that outlines planned additional steps with milestones and expected outcomes. Responses should be no longer than five pages per issue.

A. Progress in Addressing Diversity and Inclusive Excellence

1. Leadership on Diversity

Historically, Cal Poly has engaged in diversity-related initiatives through grassroots efforts from faculty, staff, and students. Over time, these expanded to include institutional efforts to foster a more inclusive learning and workplace environment while strategically closing the achievement gap and increasing graduation rates. As pointed out in the 2012 EER report, several steps were taken to provide training to faculty, staff and students, as well as to recognize programs such as the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation.

The WASC team, after visiting Cal Poly during the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER), made several recommendations under the standards that included progress in addressing diversity, including the diversity of the faculty, staff, and students, the campus climate, and the effectiveness of various initiatives to support diversity and achievement of underrepresented students.

Cal Poly is now better positioned to effectively address the concerns raised by the WASC team and Commission, building on the previous work accomplished toward enhancing diversity and campus climate for faculty, staff and students. This report will primarily focus on efforts instituted since the 2012 visit to show progress in addressing achievement gaps and improving campus climate.

Inclusive Excellence Model. In 2009, Cal Poly adopted the concept of "Inclusive Excellence" (short for "Making Excellence Inclusive") based on an initiative of the Association of American College & Universities (AAC&U). This initiative was designed to help colleges and universities fully integrate their diversity and educational quality efforts and embed them into the core of their academic mission and institutional functioning. Excellence is a pillar upon which the institution's faculty and students pride themselves. Given the institutional commitment to increase diversity and uphold the standard of excellence, the Inclusive Excellence model is ideal.

In early 2010, the Office of Inclusive Excellence was established within the Office of the President to provide implementation advice and support. The office was headed by an associate vice president, who undertook a number of initiatives including faculty and staff training on Inclusive Excellence and the implementation of a pilot program entitled Intergroup Dialogues, first developed at the University of Michigan, which has been widely adopted at other universities around the country.

Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusivity. In 2011, President Armstrong instituted an organizational model that more clearly emphasized the university's commitment to addressing diversity and campus climate. In August 2012, a search was initiated for a new position with the title Executive Director for University Diversity and Inclusivity. Subsequently, in March 2013, the Office of University Diversity and Inclusivity (OUDI) was established under the leadership of the new Executive Director, Annie Holmes. Ms. Holmes has over a decade of higher education experience spanning student affairs, access for underrepresented students, conflict resolution, employment equity, and training for faculty and staff.

The Executive Director reports to the Provost and President and provides leadership in diversity strategic planning, guidance in recruitment, retention efforts, and fostering a welcoming and inclusive campus climate for faculty, staff, and students.

The Executive Director oversees OUDI and the Equal Employment Office, with responsibilities including Title IX compliance and training, other federal and legislative compliance, the affirmation action plan, support of faculty recruitment, unconscious bias training, strategic diversity outreach, diversity-related curricular review, and campus climate for faculty, staff, and students. OUDI has offered campus-wide programs, sponsored diverse speakers and hosted events that address many aspects of diversity in order to engage the campus in becoming more culturally invested.

The Executive Director chairs the Inclusive Excellence Council, which advises the President on the implementation of Inclusive Excellence at Cal Poly. In an effort to provide leadership opportunities to students in diversity and inclusivity and to support Cal Poly's Learn by Doing philosophy, the Executive Director established the Student Diversity Advisory Council (SDAC) winter 2014, which identifies projects to enhance the campus climate for students. SDAC is currently researching how universities utilize murals and artwork to engage campuses in diverse perspectives in order to develop a proposal to present to campus leadership. SDAC also advises the Executive Director on issues affecting student learning in the curriculum and co-curriculum, providing great insight into the student experience at Cal Poly. During the winter 2014 quarter, the Executive Director brought together 15 students interested in participating on SDAC. This inaugural group consisted of student ambassadors, student athletes, and student representatives across race, ethnicity, fields of study, religion, and other aspects of diverse backgrounds. The dialogue revealed the need to create community across difference, unconscious bias and micro-aggressions in the classroom, and to foster a sense of belonging so that all students see themselves as Mustangs.

The Executive Director partners with the university leadership to develop strategies for improvements in recruitment and retention initiatives. The Executive Director works

closely with the Associate Vice Provost for Marketing and Enrollment Development to identify strategies that can increase applications from qualified underrepresented minority (URM) students within state legislative restrictions. The Executive Director has also worked with Academic Personnel and the Office of Human Resources to develop new policies and guidelines for diversifying candidate pools for faculty and staff positions.

Currently, an effort is being made to identify external funding sources to support underrepresented students who want to attend Cal Poly. Other diversity and inclusivity initiatives are still in the planning and implementation stage, such as the development and implementation of a diversity strategic framework and the provision of more training opportunities to faculty and staff.

Lastly, OUD&I offers campus-wide events, such as a community-wide Diversity and Inclusivity Colloquium, which make the topics of diversity and inclusivity more visible. OUD&I oversees the annual Welcome Networking Reception at the beginning of the fall quarter, inviting new students to meet with diverse faculty and staff. Early interaction between underrepresented students and faculty is vital for student retention, graduation rates, and career planning.⁸ Beginning this academic year, Cal Poly will organize its first Inclusive Excellence Week to engage students, faculty, and staff. Academic and administrative departments will be encouraged to offer educational workshops and programs during the week of May 8-16, 2015, to raise awareness of all aspects of creating a more inclusive campus community.

Whereas OUD&I provides a centralized effort to ensure university-wide commitment, diversity and inclusion are also supported and developed through other administrative positions on campus. Those efforts include expanding faculty education through the role of the Inclusive Excellence Specialist and through leadership in addressing equity for underrepresented students in the colleges, as exemplified by the role of one of the new associate deans in the College of Science and Math who was assigned to focus on student success, diversity, and inclusivity.

Inclusive Excellence Specialist. The Inclusive Excellence (IE) Instruction Specialist position was created in the Center for Teaching, Learning, & Technology to support faculty and staff curriculum development. A search was initiated and Robin Parent accepted the position fall 2013. One of the first efforts of the IE specialist involved the organization and launching of a yearlong learning community focused on inclusive classroom climate. The learning community met twelve times throughout the year and ended with a celebration of learning with two other learning communities where participants shared the artifacts they produced during the year. During fall 2013 the IE Specialist also began working with the First Generation Committee on faculty and staff professional development that resulted in a workshop for faculty and staff, five reading groups with a total of fifty participants, and a nationally known speaker as a culminating event. Each quarter the IE Specialist increased the number of Midterm Chats conducted in faculty classrooms. Midterm Chats provide students the opportunity to give anonymous feedback to instructors about what is

⁸ Hurtado, Sylvia, M. Kevin Eagan, Minh C. Tran, Christopher B. Newman, Mitchell J. Chang, and Paolo Velasco. "We do science here": Underrepresented students' interactions with faculty in different college contexts." *Journal of Social Issues* 67, no. 3 (2011): 553-579.

working, not working, and to offer suggestions for the course. These chats also provide opportunities to discuss pedagogy and curriculum design that support diversity and inclusivity in the classroom. The IE Specialist also planned and conducted workshops on course design, assessment, and engaging the co-curricular; consulted individually with faculty and staff; taught a section of Women Gender Studies 201; as well as facilitated summer reading groups on racism and bias and teaching inclusively.

These efforts in the first year have led to increased awareness for the IE position on campus, which has resulted in high demand and a packed second-year calendar. The IE Specialist will be working with the Orfalea College of Business on assessing the college's ethics and diversity learning objectives throughout the year; engaging in additional workshop planning and facilitation; presenting at a national conference; working on assessment of Learn by Doing; conducting a study on mindset; and engaging in additional responsibilities of consulting, learning communities, teaching, and serving on committees. The recent campus climate survey will also provide evidence to inform future faculty development in areas of inclusive spaces, awareness and attention to the support of diverse students in the classroom, bias awareness in course content, faculty behavior, and student-to-student engagement among other topics.

Associate Dean in College of Science and Math. In fall 2014, the dean of the College of Science and Math appointed a new Associate Dean with a focus on student success and welfare in regards to diversity and inclusivity. Some primary areas of focus will include working closely with staff in the college advising center; tracking student progress-to-degree and incorporating strategies to intervene where students may be experiencing barriers related to expected academic progress; working with students, faculty and staff from across campus on diversity-related matters/programs; assisting with events such as PolyCultural weekend, Culture Fest, and SOAR; providing administrative support to college cultural clubs; and assisting the dean with change of majors into and out of the college.

Cal Poly Alumni Association. The Black Alumni Chapter of the Cal Poly Alumni Association (http://www.alumni.calpoly.edu/cpaa_chapters/black---alumni---chapter) has been in existence for more than one year. This affinity group's vision is to create an alumni community that seeks to be engaged with their originating programs and the University in a variety of ways. Benefits of having this organization include the chance to implement programs to enhance educational opportunities and the quality of life for African American alumni, students, faculty and staff; the opportunity to advocate for an active program of affirmative action to ensure the involvement and participation of African American students, faculty and staff in all aspects of the university; and to mobilize resources to assist African American students in their matriculation at Cal Poly.

2. Diversity and Recruitment

The WASC Commission made several recommendations regarding diversity and the campus climate. The Commission noted that, although the proposed action items in the EER report were good steps, significantly more progress needed to be made to enhance the diversity of students, staff, and faculty.

Diversity enriches student intellectual, moral, and civic development in higher education institutions⁹. Cal Poly is committed to attracting diverse faculty, staff and students to enhance student learning, experiences, critical thinking and success in STEM. To that end, recruitment efforts have been enhanced to increase diversity on campus. On campus, strong efforts have continued to focus on recruitment of diverse student populations. New efforts have focused on increasing the recruitment of diverse faculty. In the future, efforts will focus on increasing the recruitment of more diverse staff.

Recruitment of Faculty and Staff. Cal Poly is well positioned to attract diverse candidates to engage in Learn by Doing at a high-ranking comprehensive polytechnic university. Attentive and aggressive recruitment efforts are vital to attracting diverse candidates for employment, so OUD&I was engaged immediately in establishing appropriate practices. Over the last ten years, the ethnic diversity of the Total Instructional Faculty has changed very little (appendices [A.1](#); [A.2](#); [A.3](#)). The faculty who self-identify¹⁰ as white has gone down in percentage slightly, from 81.6% (965 of 1183) of the total in 2004 to 76.7% (1032 of 1345) in 2014. Faculty who self-identify as Hispanic/Latino has slightly increased from 5.6% in 2004 (66 of 1183) to 6.4% (86 of 1345) in 2014. Asian American group has seen a slight decrease from 7.1% (84 of 1183) in 2004 to 6.1% (82 of 1345) in 2014. It is important to note the low representation of African American faculty with a headcount of 19 in 2004 to 20 in 2014.

In the period from 2004 to 2014, the gender diversity of the Cal Poly faculty has changed, although it is still far from balanced. Women have gone from 32.0% of the total in 2004 to 38.7% of the total in 2014 (appendix [A.4](#)).

The ethnic diversity for the total CSU system faculty in the fall 2013 in comparison was 72.0% white, 14.2% Asian and Pacific Islander, 9.6% Latino, and 4.2% unknown. At Cal Poly, the distribution of faculty in all racial/ethnic categories except for white was lower

⁹ Viernes Turner, Caroline Sotello, "Diversifying the Faculty: A Guidebook for Search Committees" (2002). *ADVANCE Library Collection*. Paper 282.

¹⁰ Overall, employees at Cal Poly tend to self-identify race/ethnicity, gender and ability status in very low numbers. OUD&I is identifying strategies to increase the demographic data of employees collected.

than the system average.¹¹ Of the system wide faculty, 50.0% are women. Cal Poly varies widely from the system wide norm for gender diversity (table 1; appendix A.5).¹² **Table 1. Instructional Faculty Headcounts of Cal Poly and the CSU Wide System**

Instructional Faculty Fall 2013 by Headcount					
		Cal Poly		CSU	
Ethnicity	White	1019	85.7%	16148	72.0%
	Asian and Pacific Islander	94	7.9%	3193	14.2%
	Hispanic/Latino	64	5.4%	2161	9.6%
	Unknown	12	1.0%	934	4.2%
	Total	1189		22436	
Gender	Men	727	61.3%	12218	50.0%
	Women	459	38.7%	12237	50.0%
	Total	1186		24455	

The total faculty profile by tenure-status has shifted slightly toward the non-tenured since AY 2007-08 (appendices A.6; A.7). In this respect, Cal Poly is not unlike other campuses that have made this kind of adjustment in response to recessionary budgets, although the improving economy has made it possible to improve hiring patterns. The percentage of total paid full time equivalent (FTE) from non-tenured faculty has increased slightly, from 27.9% (275.9 of 990.0) of the total instructional full time faculty in fall 2007 to 31.8% (317.5 of 999.8) of the headcount total in fall 2014. The percentage of paid FTE from tenured faculty has also slightly increased, from 41.7% (413.2 of 990.0) in fall 2007 to 42.9% (428.5 of 999.8) in fall 2014. The percentage of paid FTE from tenure-track faculty has gradually decreased, from 22.6% (224.0 of 990.0) in fall 2007 to 16.3% (163.0 of 999.8) in fall 2014.

During this time from 2007 to 2014, the faculty rank profile (appendix A.8; A.9) has shifted toward the junior portion of the tenured and tenure-track faculty. The percentage of paid FTE from professors has gone down from 30.6% (303.2 of 990.0) to 27.2% (272.1 of 999.8). The percentage of paid FTE from associate professors has gone up slightly from 15.9% (157.0 of 990.0) to 17.8% (178.4 of 999.8). The percentage of paid FTE from assistant professors has decreased from 17.9% (177.0 of 990.0) to 14.1% (141.0 of 999.8) — a reflection of the spate of recent non tenure-track hires (lecturers).

By comparison, the Full Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF) distribution of CSU faculty by rank in fall 2013 was 28.3% professors, 15.8% associate professors, and 10.8% assistant professors (appendix A.5).¹³ The fall 2014 data are not yet available.

The highest representation of URM within faculty-rank in fall 2004 was found in the assistant professor rank at 12.7%, and that representation has now shifted in fall 2014 to the associate professor rank at 9.5% in fall 2014 (appendix A.10).

¹¹ California Faculty Association (CFA), *Changing Faces of CSU Faculty and Students*, 15, 17. Fall 2014 data are not yet available.

¹² CFA, *Changing Faces*, 23-24.

¹³ CFA, *Changing Faces*, 10.

The low levels of diverse faculty on campus have driven efforts for improvement. To enhance recruitment efforts for diverse faculty, OUD&I collaborated with campus leaders to craft diversity statements for all vacancy announcements, and purchased an annual subscription to Diverse Issues in Higher Education's job site (<http://diversejobs.net/>) to advertise all employment opportunities (appendix [A.11](#)). Additionally, OUD&I partnered with Academic Personnel, Human Resources, and Equal Opportunity to create new guidelines for faculty recruitment (appendix [A.12](#)). The newest addition involves all search committees to submit a recruitment plan to describe steps for advertising broadly to attract diverse candidates and including a diversity-related question to be asked of each candidate during the screening process. The guidelines were piloted in AY 2013-14 as the President and Provost approved 70 tenure-track faculty openings. The openings gave OUD&I and Academic Personnel an opportunity to train search committees in the new guidelines, with an additional unconscious bias training for all involved including college deans. As has long been the established practice, every search committee must also include a currently trained Equal Employment Facilitator, who is trained to provide assurance that all candidates are involved in an equitable and fair process.

OUD&I, Academic Personnel, and Human Resources will soon look at the policies and practices for recruiting diverse staff.

Recruitment of Students. Cal Poly has seen some progress in increasing the ethnic diversity of the total student body (appendices [A.13](#); [A.14](#); [A.15](#)). Students who self-identify as white have declined, from 63.8% in 2004 (11,216 of 17,582) to 58.6% in 2014 (11,828 of 20,186). Hispanic student enrollment has grown from 9.6% (1690 of 17,582) to 15.2% (3064 of 20,186), Asian American student enrollment from 11.3% (1981 of 17,582) to 11.6% (2351 of 20,186). During the same timeframe, African American student enrollment has decreased from 1.0% (175 of 17,582) to 0.7% (143 of 20,186), peaking at 1.2% (237 of 19,777) in 2007. A steady decline is also evident between 2004 and 2014 for Native American students, from 0.8% (133 of 17,582) to 0.2% (32 of 20,186). The decrease in the latter demographic representations could be based on the increase in students identifying as multi-racial, given the category was added in 2009. Multi-racial has steadily increased from 2.2% (429 of 19,325) in 2009 to 6.9% (1386 of 20,186) in 2014.

Looking at the student profile, the portion that self-identifies as URM has increased steadily from 11.4% (1998 of 17,582) in fall 2004 to 16.0% (3239 of 20,186) in fall 2014 (appendix [A.16](#)). The portion that self-identifies as nont-URM has decreased from 88.6% (15,584 of 17,582) to 84% (16,947 of 20,186).

By comparison, the portion of CSU students that self-identifies as white was 29.1% in fall 2013; as Latino/a, 33.4%; as Asian and Pacific Islander, 17%; and as other and unknown, 11.3% (appendix [A.5](#)).¹⁴

Student enrollment based on gender has changed from 56.8% in 2004 (9992 of 17,582) to 53.9% in 2014 (10,888 of 20,186) for men and from 43.2% in 2004 (7590 of 17,582) to 46.1% in 2014 (9298 of 20,186) for women (appendix [A.17](#)).

¹⁴ CFA, *Changing Faces*, 32.

Admissions has been able to significantly enhance the overall applicant pool based on business intelligence and targeted marketing. First-time freshmen applicants have grown from 23,691 in 2005 to 43,812 in 2014, representing an increase of 84.9% over the last decade. The Annual Report provides all of the admissions data (appendix [A.18](#)).

Overall, URM applicants increased from 4,916 in 2005 to 13,334 applicants in 2014, an increase of 171%. URM applicants now comprise 30.4% of the freshman pool compared to 20.8% a decade ago. During the same period, white applicants increased from 11,872 in 2005 to 16,938 in 2014, an increase of 42.7%; they now comprise just 38.7% of the pool compared to 50.1% a decade ago.

Latino applicants increased from 3,957 in 2005 to 11,011 in 2014, an increase of 178.2%. Latino applicants now comprise 25.1% of the freshman applicant pool compared to 16.7% a decade ago. During the same period, African American applicants increased from 659 to 969, an increase of 47%; they now comprise 2.2% of the applicant pool.

Still, URM students who are admitted to Cal Poly enroll at lower rates than non-URM students. The URM yield rate for Fall 2014 was 29.5% (830 of 2,814); the non-URM yield was 35.7% (3,832 of 10,719). The yield for all students was 34.4% (4,662 of 13,533). The university leadership believes that an increase in privately funded scholarships, such as those being provided through the CP Scholars program (see page 17), would encourage a higher percentage of URM students to enroll at Cal Poly.

The transfer data are even more encouraging. Transfer applicants have grown from 4,047 in 2005 to 7,884 in 2014, representing an increase of 94.8% over the last decade. In addition, this cohort is the most Hispanic (26.1%).

Overall, the number of URM transfer applicants increased from 745 in 2005 to 2,491 in 2014. They now comprise 31.6% of the overall transfer pool, compared to 18.4% a decade ago. During the same period, the number of white transfer applicants also increased, from 2,035 to 3,165 or an increase of 55.6%. However, white applicants now comprise just 40.1% of the transfer applicant pool compared to 50.3% a decade ago.

Latino transfer applicants have increased from 600 in 2005 to 2,055 in 2014, an increase of 242%. Latino transfer applicants now comprise 26.1% of the overall transfer pool, compared to 14.8% a decade ago. During the same period, African American applicants have increased from 78 to 142, an increase of 54.9%; they now comprise 1.8% of the pool.

Cal Poly is committed to its mission of providing a quality education to the citizens of the state of California. To this end, the Office of Admissions continues to develop relationships with selected California high schools through the Partners Program. This provides outreach and access to schools serving communities with substantive numbers of first generation or economically disadvantaged students. Through a statewide network of partnerships, Cal Poly aims to increase the number of qualified students admitted to the university from these schools. All students from 230 Partner Schools receive additional consideration in the applicant selection process. In addition, Cal Poly has selected 75 Primary Partner Schools to receive additional recruitment and outreach services that include:

- Partner scholarship offers to the top selected and enrolled freshmen.

- The appointment of a Cal Poly professional to serve as the school's liaison for outreach activities and pre-collegiate programs.
- Two school visits each academic year from an admissions officer.
- Priority status to attend on-campus pre-collegiate events.

Depending on the melt rates, this year's freshman class should contain the largest Partners cohort with the highest academic profile ever. The university enrolled 8 National Merit Finalists and 5 National Hispanic Recognized Scholars. In addition, this 2014 FTF class is the least white (58.3%) and the most Asian (12.9%) in Cal Poly's history, in addition to having the highest proportion of non-resident students (17.3%).

Strategic and pragmatic initiatives to increase ethnic and gender representation among the student body align with the university mission of educating the diverse citizens of California and the commitment of engaging all students in building cross cultural competence and graduates who can be successful global citizens. This work is also being conducted to ensure diverse students as well as faculty can be successful during their tenure. To facilitate this commitment, attention is being given to bridging achievement gaps and fostering an inclusive campus climate conducive to enhancing student and professional success.

3. Diversity, Learning, and Student Success

Cal Poly is intentional in accomplishing goals for student development and has instituted structural efforts to ensure all students are successful. Strategic imperatives are integral in preparing all students to become global citizens through exposure to diversity in the curriculum and throughout campus. Attention is also given to ensure underrepresented students are offered support to aid in their retention and graduation.

Student Success and the Achievement Gap. As described in the last EER report, Cal Poly has experienced steady increases in its four- and six-year graduation rates. The President has established the goal of reaching a four-year rate of 75% and a six-year rate of 90%.

The actual four-year rate, based on 1990 to 2014 data, has gone from 7.6% to 47.0%, and the six-year rate, based on 1990 to 2008 data, has gone from 58.5% to 78.0%. These improvements are, in part, a reflection of the steady increases in the academic qualifications of the first-time freshmen (FTF), whether measured by the high school GPA, SAT reading and math scores, or ACT composite score, as well as multiple efforts to provide clear pathways to completion of degrees and improved access to classes (appendix [A.19](#)).

A closer look at the six-year graduation rates tells a more complicated story. After reaching a high of 76.4% for the total university cohort entering in fall 2005, the rates declined for two years, reaching a low of 72.4% for the fall 2007 cohort before rebounding to an all time high of 78.0% for the fall 2008 cohort (appendix [A.20](#)). This number exceeded the CSU's goal of 76% for Cal Poly's fall 2009 cohort.¹⁵

A disaggregation by college shows the university's six-year graduation rates closely tracking those of the College of Engineering (CENG), which experienced a longer decline beginning with the fall 2002 cohort (appendices [A.20](#); [A.21](#)). This decline reached a low of 57.3% for the fall 2007 cohort, followed by a sharp increase of 68.1% for the fall 2008 cohort. A similar pattern is evident in the 6-year disqualification rates by college, students ineligible to remain enrolled on the basis of poor academic performance (appendices [A.22](#); [A.23](#); [A.24](#)). These numbers are higher than the actual numbers of student dismissed, as some appeals were approved. The university and CENG numbers both rose to a high for the fall 2007 cohort and then rapidly declined — a pattern not matched by any other college.

It might be argued that the number of students disqualified in CENG is always an artifact of its student population, the largest at Cal Poly. In fact, CENG's fall 2007 cohort numbered 1484, or 33.6% of the 2007 total university cohort, and the college disqualified 21.8% of their 2007 cohort (324 of 1484) (appendix [A.20](#)). Its nearest competitor at the time was the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences, which disqualified only 6.6% of its fall 2007 cohort (appendix [A.22](#)).

¹⁵ The California State University, *CSU Student Success Dashboard*, "Graduation Initiatives Goals," accessed 16 Feb. 2015, <https://csudata.calstate.edu/SASPortal/navigate.do?PortalPage=PortalPage%2Bomi%3A%2F%2FFoundation%2Freposname%3DFoundation%2FPSPortalPage%3Bid%3DA5HXUSDH.BN0000RW>

According to CENG, this rise and fall in the number of disqualified students was the result of two factors. One factor was the adoption, at the encouragement of the then provost, of a more aggressive approach to academic probation and disqualification (APDQ). This was at a time during the recession when the CSU responded to its constrained budget by penalizing the campuses for exceeding their enrollment targets.

The other factor was a surge in admissions, with the number of enrolled FTF in CENG jumping from a low of 755 in fall 2005 to 1,175 in fall 2006 and then to 1,484 in fall 2007. This was a time when the level of impaction (applicants/enrolled students) was relatively low at 4:1, which should be compared to the recent level of 14:1. As a result of this relative lack of selectivity, the college had to reach more deeply into its pool, admitting students with poorer academic qualifications than previously, as measured by GPA and test scores. This relatively weaker group of students — the average high school GPA was still above 3.70 — then experienced a combined shortage of classes and support services.

Graduation Gaps. While Cal Poly's six-year graduation rate was improving overall, the graduation rate achievement gap between URM and non-URM students was improving as well. The achievement gap decreased from 16.9 percentage points for the fall 1999 cohort to 12.9 percentage points for the fall 2008 cohort, reaching a low of 8.2 percentage points for the fall 2005 cohort (appendix [A.25](#)).

Across the same cohorts, the graduation gap for first-generation students went from 16.8% in fall 1999 to 15.7% in fall 2008, reaching a low of 10.7% for the fall 2004 cohort (appendix [A.26](#)). The graduation gap for Pell recipients slightly increased from 11.8% in fall 1999 to 12.0% in fall 2008, reaching a low of 9.2% for the fall 2002 cohort (appendix [A.27](#)).

As is typical nationally, men have been graduating at lower rates than women, with the gap varying from a low of 10.2% for the fall 2002 cohort to a high of 15.0% for the fall 2004 cohort (appendix [A.28](#)). The gap for the fall 2008 cohort is 12.7%.

The intersection of race and gender also shows relevant gaps as URM females have a consistently higher 6-year graduation rates than their URM male counterparts. In 2002, Cal Poly reported a 64.5% 6-year graduation rate with a 60.3% graduation rate for URM females and 41.8% graduation rate for URM males (appendix [A.29](#)). The gap widened by 2012, with 75.5% 6-year graduation rate for URM females and 52.1% for URM males, as compared to the total university 6-year graduation rate of 72.2%. The 6-year graduation rate for URM females surpassed the university graduation rate in 2012 by 3.3 percentage points.

Some of these graduation gaps may be attributed to additional factors that may affect URM student disqualification rates more than majority student disqualification rates. Further study will be conducted so that the university may better understand trends in graduation rates and their relationship to trends in disqualifications, with the goal to design specific interventions.

Peer Comparisons. The CSU and its 22 other campuses provide a convenient, if not always appropriate, peer group for Cal Poly. On one hand, when comparing student, staff, and faculty profiles, the CSU context is appropriately revealing as Cal Poly shares in the

system's mission of serving a diverse community of Californians, as well as its budget and conditions of employment. On the other hand, Cal Poly has understood for some time now that the CSU context, because of differences in student demographics, majors offered, financial resources, and academic qualifications, provides an inappropriate peer group on issues of student success.

Over a period of 14 years (2000-2014), Cal Poly had the lowest average percentage of URM students in the system, which was calculated at 14%; the system average was 37%. It may be worth noting that Cal Poly also had highest percentage of STEM majors in the system at 64%; its closest competitor was the Pomona polytechnic campus at 47%. In the future, it might be helpful to consider the Cal Poly student profile data disaggregated by majors or groups of majors to determine the relationship of individual Cal Poly majors on student diversity and thus provide a basis for focused efforts. In the 2000 to 2014 time span, Cal Poly had the highest average six-year graduation rate in the system at 70.45%; the system average was 50.29%. The university's URM graduation rate achievement gap of 12.3% in 2007 was lower than the system average of 13.65%.¹⁶

The campuses of the University of California provide an additional, and in some ways more appropriate and aspirational peer group, because the students are more comparable and because the UCs (with the exception of the Merced and Riverside campuses) have higher six-year graduation rates. The UC-wide six-year graduation rate for the fall 2007 entering cohort was 83%, the Cal Poly rate was 72.4%, and the CSU system wide rate was 51.8% (appendix [A.30](#)).

NSSE and Diversity. Another indicator of diversity and inclusivity in the campus culture can be found in data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). This allows respondents to report opportunities for significant learning experiences leading to higher levels of student engagement and success.

On the 2014 NSSE, Cal Poly students reported low interactions with diverse perspectives in course discussions and assignments and low institutional emphasis on encouraging student to student interactions and discussions with members of a different race or ethnicity in their freshman and senior years, respectively (appendix [B.6](#)). On Q17, in response to the prompt, "How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?" 51% of Cal Poly seniors reported, "Being an informed and active citizen," whereas 49% of seniors reported "Understanding people of other backgrounds."

In order to address these issues, OUD&I will partner with the Academic Senate this academic year to conduct a review of the United States Cultural Pluralism curriculum requirement, as recommended by the university's last EER report. A task force will be created to evaluate the work done to date, including the evaluation of courses identified to address diversity, and make recommendations to the Academic Senate. OUD&I will work

¹⁶ CSU Student Success Dashboard, accessed 16 Feb. 2015, <https://csudata.calstate.edu/SASPortal/main.do>. System numbers are based on the CSU Enrollment Reporting System and may vary from those published by Cal Poly because of campus updating.

with CTLT to provide more faculty development opportunities in AY 2015-16 related to diversity learning and classroom inclusion.

Retention Initiatives and Support Programs. The Commission took note of programmatic efforts and initiatives geared toward improving the achievement gaps for URM and first generation college students. These efforts are identified below.

Multicultural Engineering Program. Within the Multicultural Engineering Program (MEP), many new initiatives have been implemented to increase retention rates for underrepresented students in engineering. The most unique retention effort is offering each student on academic probation the opportunity for academic coaching. This program requires students to meet regularly with their MEP Advisor and assists them in their time management, goal setting, identification of resources, and other personal, professional, or academic struggles. This service is also provided for students whose quarterly GPAs fall between a 2.0 and 2.2 and to members of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers and the Society of Black Engineers and Scientists.

In addition, MEP has collaborated with the Engineering Advising Center to create and implement academic probation workshops, PolyPals (mentoring program), and the Transfer Advising Program (TAP). Academic Probation workshops are geared towards upper-division students on an academic contract and focus on motivation, considering past obstacles, and creating goals for the current quarter. PolyPals, still in its pilot phase, links Cal Poly student mentors to incoming freshmen and transfers within MEP and the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. The TAP assists in creating connections for both new and returning transfers so they can flourish academically and professionally.

Cal Poly Scholars. The Cal Poly Scholars program (CP Scholars) aims to recruit and retain high-achieving students from Cal Poly's Partner Schools. Eligible graduates must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to demonstrate qualifying need — a family income of less than \$80,001 and an expected family contribution of less than \$12,001. CP Scholars receive an annual award of \$3,000 and an iPad, with the goal of attracting and retaining qualified students. The co-curricular component of the program — workshops and events to support academic achievement, student community and sense of belonging, as well as career and leadership readiness — is intended to ensure student persistence and graduation.

In the last three academic years, CP Scholars has grown both in effectiveness and the number of students served. Beginning in AY 2012-13, the program accepted 14 eligible Partner School graduates who enrolled as freshmen in the College of Engineering and received academic assistance from the Multicultural Engineering Program. Now in 2014-15, the program has accepted 96 graduates, its largest cohort yet, and included scholars from the Orfalea College of Business for the first time. To support continued expansion and sustainability of the program, Student Affairs has hired a Cal Poly Scholars Coordinator to create and implement an engagement curriculum for our Scholars, and is working with University Advancement to secure private funds for up to 500 students.

The "Cal Poly Orfalea Scholars" scholarship program for Orfalea College of Business students serves students from Partner High Schools. Beginning fall 2014, this scholarship provided aid to 21 Orfalea students, will continue to fund them in the amount of \$3,000 per

year for up to 5 years, and will provide them with a Professional Academic Advisor to provide programming and academic support, as well as academic probation support.

The college's "First in Business" program was launched in Fall 2014 for students who identify as first generation. This enrollment included a customized section of BUS 100 - Freshman Orientation and College Success 1 unit course and a support network of Faculty, Staff, and Peer Mentors to guide them to academic success in their Cal Poly career.

MOSAIC. MOSAIC is a scholarship program targeting 76 schools in the Washington DC and Chicago areas. All students from MOSAIC schools are eligible to receive a total of \$5,000 each in scholarship funds (appendix [A.31](#)). The scholarship began in fall 2014 with eight awards and two continuing DC students from fall 2013. OUD&I serves as the point of contact for these students and a retention program is still being developed.

BEACoN Mentors Program. Funded by the campus student success fee and launched in fall 2014, the Believe, Educate & Empower, Advocate, Collaborate and Nurture (BEACoN) program aims to:

- Educate and empower URM students.
- Advocate for them as they complete their Cal Poly education.
- Bridge the achievement gaps between URM students, who have a six-year graduation rate of 61.9%, and their white counterparts, who have a six-year rate of 74.2%.¹⁷

Three faculty members are serving as mentors for two-year terms. They work collaboratively with the campus community to increase the success and retention of underrepresented or underperforming students.

Cal Poly PEEPS: Program for Engineering Excellence for Partner Schools. In 2014, Cal Poly was awarded a \$618,815 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant that will be used to fund up to \$10,000/year scholarships for at least four years for engineering students from partner schools. The funds are part of an NSF scholarship initiative in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S-STEM) that will include support systems such as supplemental workshops in science, math and engineering. PEEPS students will visit high schools as role models to encourage others to join STEM fields. Dr. Kathy Chen, Mechanical Engineering department chair, is leading and coordinating this effort.

Student Affairs has increased available staff in the cross-cultural centers from three to six individuals to provide culturally relevant engagement activities for students from underrepresented backgrounds and to provide leadership on campus.

Affinity groups for diverse and underrepresented faculty and staff at Cal Poly are referred to as the "FSAs" and include: the American Indian and Indigenous Faculty and Staff Association, the Asian and Pacific Islander Faculty and Staff Association, the Black Faculty and Staff Association, the Chicana Latino Faculty and Staff Association and the Pride Faculty and Staff Association. Each FSA provides outreach to faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and supports cultural clubs and organizations in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

¹⁷ IPEDS, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/> accessed 20 Feb. 2015

4. Campus Climate Survey

The WASC Commission emphasized the need for further attention and development in the area of diversity. In order to attract and retain students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented racial-ethnic minority groups, creating a positive climate to support these groups is essential. Cal Poly has implemented efforts to recruit and retain diverse students. However, little data was previously available to better understand the impact of institutional efforts, as well as challenges and barriers faced by faculty, staff, and students across campus. Even less was known of the overall campus climate.

Campus climate is defined as the “current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of faculty, staff, and administrators and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential”.¹⁸ To make progress in demonstrating measurable improvements in the campus climate, a baseline survey needed to be conducted. A Campus Climate Survey would provide the campus with baseline data to measure success in accomplishing the strategic efforts set forth by the President.

OU&I identified an external firm to conduct the survey, to allow for confidentiality and anonymity in the process. During AY 2013-14, 29 faculty, staff, and students came together to serve as the Campus Climate Working Group, which collaborated with Rankin & Associates Consulting in the development and implementation of an extensive campus climate survey. Dr. Susan Rankin is a leading authority in campus climate assessments and has facilitated this process with more than 100 institutions nationally. Entitled “Cal Poly Campus Climate Survey: Your Campus, Your Voice, Your Experience,” the instrument contained 108 questions falling into three categories: perceptions, demographics, and experiences. Before its release, the campus climate survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board. The survey was available to all faculty, staff, and students from February 26 to April 4, 2014.

The survey was completed by 6,366 campus constituents, resulting in an overall response rate of 29%. Staff had the highest response rate of 84%. Faculty had a response rate of 42%, graduate students had a rate of 31%, and undergraduate students had a rate of 25%.

Rankin & Associates analyzed the survey results and presented them to the campus on October 16, 2014 at two town hall meetings. Their full report, which includes the survey instrument, is available at <http://campusclimate.calpoly.edu/>. The executive summary is provided in appendix **A.32**.

The results indicated that the campus climate at Cal Poly is comparable to that at the more than 100 campuses with whom Rankin & Associates have worked. They identified some key areas of strength at Cal Poly and some areas in need of improvement.

Among the university’s strengths, Rankin & Associates noted that a large majority (80%) of faculty, staff, and student respondents reported being “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate at Cal Poly. Examples include 67% of faculty respondents and 79% of staff

¹⁸ Rankin, 2003.

respondents reporting that they felt comfortable taking earned leaves of work without fear of recrimination.

Other areas of strength include positive attitudes about work-life issues by faculty and staff. 67% (959 of 6,366) of respondents were comfortable taking leave that they were entitled to without fear that it may affect their job/careers. 79% (731 of 934) of staff respondents found Cal Poly supportive of their taking leave. 59% (543 of 934) of staff respondents acknowledged that their supervisors provided ongoing feedback to help improve their performance. 58% (536 of 934) of staff respondents felt that they had supervisors who provided them with resources to pursue educational/professional development opportunities. 55% (508 of 934) of staff respondents indicated that Cal Poly was supportive of flexible work schedules. 63% (326 of 531) of faculty respondents believed that their colleagues included them in opportunities that helped their career as much as they did others in their position. 53% of faculty respondents (282 of 531) agreed that the tenure/promotion process was clear, and 57% agreed that it was reasonable (300 of 531).

Campus Climate Influences Student Performance and Success. The study found students reported positive attitudes about academic experiences with 90% (4,412 of 4,641) of student respondents stating that many of their courses within the past year have been intellectually stimulating. 89% (4,321 of 4,641) of student respondents reported that their academic experience has had a positive influence on their intellectual growth and interest in ideas, and 89% (4,311 of 4,641) of student respondents were satisfied with the extent of their intellectual development since enrolling at Cal Poly. 88% (4,282 of 4,641) of student respondents indicated that their interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since coming to Cal Poly. 90% (4,412 of 4,641) of student respondents believed that many of their courses this year have been intellectually stimulating. 89% (4,321 of 4,641) of student respondents reported that their academic experience has had a positive influence on their intellectual growth and interest in ideas. 89% (4,311 of 4,641) of student respondents were satisfied with the extent of their intellectual development since enrolling at Cal Poly. 88% (4,282 of 4,641) of student respondents indicated that their interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since coming to Cal Poly.

Among the areas in need of improvement, Rankin & Associates noted that 22% of all respondents have experienced exclusionary behavior, which includes “intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.”¹⁹ Importantly, more women, people of color, multiple race, and LGBTQ respondents have experienced this kind of behavior than heterosexual white male respondents. These groups also reported feeling less comfortable with the campus climate. Other groups who also identified feeling less comfortable with the campus climate included non-exempt and exempt staff (when compared to administrators), people with disabilities, first generation students, and low-income students.

Finally, Rankin & Associates found that a small but meaningful percentage of respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact — 5% versus the 4% seen at other institutions in the consultant’s data bank. This conduct occurred in higher rates to those who identify as

¹⁹ Campus Climate Project Executive Summary, p. vi, <http://campusclimate.calpoly.edu/>

transgender, women, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, and people who identify as having multiple races.

After Rankin & Associates presented the results, a sub-group of the Campus Climate Working Group diligently conducted focus groups and workshops. These focus groups and workshops were intended to seek campus help in developing two to three specific and measurable actions to recommend to the university leadership.

The sub-group conducted 11 focus groups including two open to all faculty, two open to all staff, and two open to all students, as well as one each with facilities and housing staff, with women only, with members of faculty and staff associations at Cal Poly (e.g., the Black Faculty and Staff Association), with students with disabilities, and with students from the Cross Cultural Centers.

Along with the focus groups, the sub-group conducted two workshops in which participants responded to a set of questions as individuals and then in groups, with the goal of arriving at consensus answers. The questions posed in the workshops were identical to those asked in the focus groups. They were:

1. What do you appreciate the most about Cal Poly?
2. What do you dislike the most about Cal Poly?
3. What are the top three ways we can improve the campus climate at Cal Poly?

The analysis by the sub-group of the input from focus groups and workshops is still underway, but preliminary results suggest that, for question 1, key elements campus constituents appreciate are the beauty of the Cal Poly campus, the high caliber of students, the Learn by Doing philosophy, and the faculty and staff dedication to student success.

The analysis of Question 2 results has yielded common themes such as inadequate salaries, the high cost of living in the San Luis Obispo area, the lack of professional development and opportunities for professional mobility, the high workload, the perception of too many initiatives from senior management and too little focus, and the apathy regarding social justice issues.

The analysis of Question 3 results has yielded common themes such as curriculum changes to include more diversity-related issues, diversity training for faculty and staff, and the need for an anti-bullying policy.

Currently, the sub-group members are analyzing all of the notes taken in the workshops and focus groups, with the goal of comparing the results with the report from Rankin & Associates and developing a list of action items to present to the university leadership in winter 2014. It is imperative that the campus owns both the identification of possible initiatives and their assessment. Rankin & Associates recommends implementing only two to three new initiatives in the year following a campus climate survey.

During AY 2014-15, OUD&I has been engaging campus constituents and campus leadership in identifying two to three actionable goals to address during AY 2015-16. This process also involves providing a status report on changes that have occurred on campus since the implementation of the survey in February 2014. The status report will be made available

on the campus climate website along with the strategies for implementation of the actionable goals.

Beginning March 2015, campus constituents will have the opportunity to conduct research using the campus climate survey data collected by Rankin & Associates, which Cal Poly now owns. The process has already been defined, approved by the Institutional Research Board Human Subjects Committee, and will be overseen by Rachel Fernflores, Associate Professor and the primary investigator.

5. Action Plan – Update on Diversity and Campus Climate

Cal Poly is making strides toward fostering an inclusive and diverse campus community. Since the inception of a centralized office (OUD&I) dedicated to this end just two years ago, a comprehensive focus is being established to identify institutional goals and initiatives that will enhance campus climate. OUD&I is working to provide professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, students, and even community members. For example, Cal Poly will have its first Inclusive Excellence Week on May 8-16, 2015. This will provide educational opportunities that will bring awareness to all aspects of diversity. Departments from across campus and local community groups are partnering to offer a number of events and programs throughout the week that will create dialogue about diversity and inclusivity.

Success of Actions Taken and Evidence to Support Progress

- **Comprehensive Campus Climate Survey.** Cal Poly participated in the campus climate survey with very high responses from the faculty (42%, n=531), staff (84%, n=934), and graduate students (31%, n=260). Undergraduate student responses were lower (25%, n=4641), as is typical on college campuses given the numbers of students surveyed. The survey results will provide baseline data that will be used to benchmark future initiatives.
- **Expand Employee Recruitment Efforts to Include All Faculty, Staff, and Management Positions.** OUD&I and Academic Personnel will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the recruitment guidelines currently required for tenure-track faculty. Several departments have already committed to using the guidelines for lecturer and management positions.
- **Comprehensive Review of Guiding Principles for Bridging the Achievement Gap.**
 - The Inclusive Excellence Council has identified the need to review campus initiatives affecting student retention and graduation rates during AY 2014-15, which will likely extend into 2015-16. This review will be informed by data collected from the campus climate survey, which will allow for crosstab analysis that takes demographics, experiences, and perceptions into consideration. Upon completion of the review, a full report with recommendations will be submitted to the university leadership. The council will then track the success of implemented efforts.
 - The campus is currently undertaking a strategic planning initiative, Collaborative Advising for Student Success, to help define student success and review current policies and procedures impacting student retention and progress to degree. Specifically, the Change of Major, Academic Probation and Discontinuation (APDQ), and Expected Academic Progress (EAP) policies will be reviewed in AY 2014-15 and improvements made in 2015-16.

Remaining Issues and Challenges

- **Campus Climate Implementation.** The survey process was a positive step in educating the campus community on how campus climate is defined. However, more work is needed to broaden understanding and identify actionable strategies

that can be mapped to larger university imperatives. The Executive Director of OUD&I will then work with each division and unit to identify actions that align with these imperatives, which the President insists should be melded with the goals of the new academic plan for enrollment.

- **Faculty Profile by Tenure Status.** The president has established the goal of reaching 75% tenured and tenure-track of the whole faculty by 2022.
- **Diversity Employee Recruitment for Staff Positions.** While examining ways to improve the recruitment of a diverse staff, it became apparent that this process would require engagement with the collective bargaining units, as different contracts need to be taken into consideration.
- **Yield and Achievement Gap Data.** A consistent and continuous review of yield and achievement gap data should be conducted to assess the impact of new and existing strategies to improve admission, retention and graduation rates. The Inclusive Excellence Council is well positioned to advise the campus leadership on these strategies. The Director of Institutional Research is a member and will work closely with the council on this initiative.

Responses and Timelines

- **Comprehensive Campus Climate Implementation Plan.**
 - In spring 2015, the university leadership will set two to three priorities based on the results of the campus climate survey, which can be implemented within AY 2015-16. President Armstrong will present these initiatives to the campus community in May 2015.
 - OUD&I will provide the campus with a status report, made available on the campus climate website, to update the community on progress made since the survey in spring 2014. Subsequently, the Inclusive Excellence Council will make recommendations to the leadership in response to other long-term priorities.
 - Cal Poly will conduct another survey in five years (winter 2019) to assess changes in the campus climate.
- **Strategic Leadership.** OUD&I has identified six areas of focus for diversity and inclusivity: recruitment, retention, campus climate, development, community engagement, and building external relationships. OUD&I has engaged in these efforts over the past two years and is planning to present specifics about each area of focus for AY 2015-16.
- **Diversity Strategic Framework.** In spring 2015, the campus will begin to develop the new Diversity Strategic Framework, which will establish measureable outcomes that will be assessed annually. Data will be collected based on the goals and objectives set. This process will produce comparable results over the long term and promote continued, evidence-based dialogue on diversity and inclusivity.
- **Employee Recruitment.** OUD&I will annually review employee demographic data to assess the impact of new recruitment guidelines.
 - Management employee searches will be the next to be phased into the new guideline process. In Spring 2015, OUD&I and Academic Personnel will engage Human Resources in reviewing both management and staff hiring

policies, in addition to meeting with staff unions to identify appropriate implementation enhancements to the recruitment process.

- Training will be made available for all faculty and staff search committee participants to ensure their thorough understanding of the guidelines and of the impact of unconscious bias when working to create an equitable and fair process in diversifying the candidacy pool.
- Evidence from the campus climate survey suggests that both faculty and staff members have concerns about search committee processes. The Employment Equity Facilitator is a volunteer without voting rights on search committees who are charged with ensuring an equitable process in all searches. The Employment Equity Facilitator certification program will be restructured to provide more consistency and enhance efforts to support equity in searches for AY 2015-16.
- **Initiatives to Bridge the Achievement Gap.** The BEACoN mentors are collecting quantitative and qualitative data in order to track the impact of this program on student success. This data will inform future policies and practices to support URM students. This work will be ongoing and assessed annually.
 - The mentors have hired research assistants who will help to inform the mentoring of underrepresented students at a highly selective polytechnic institution.
 - The BEACoN mentors will also be launching a BEACoN mentors network to involve other faculty interested in mentoring underrepresented students. Faculty will be trained and will receive professional development opportunities through OUD&I to ensure best practices are instituted toward student success.
- **USCP Course Review.** Lastly, OUD&I and the Academic Senate are establishing a task force in spring 2015 that will convene fall 2015 to review the requirement for the United States Cultural Pluralism (USCP) courses in conjunction with the University Diversity Learning Objectives (DLOs) that were last assessed in 2008. Preliminary work is currently being conducted to identify the goals, strategies, and objectives of the task force. This task force will update the USCP requirement to align with the DLOs, review current courses based on the new requirements, and propose all curricular updates for approval through the curriculum committee of the Academic Senate.

B. Update on the Assessment of Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

1. Leadership on Assessment

Leadership on Assessment

After visiting Cal Poly during the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) phase of its last self-study, the WASC team made several recommendations under the standards that included the following:

- *Attention needs to be given to clearly identifying who among the leadership is responsible for educational assessment and assuring that the related educational goals are linked with budgeting.*
- *The faculty is encouraged to invest time in reviewing the role and critical nature of faculty governance in academic decision-making.²⁰*

In response to the second recommendation, the Academic Senate adopted a resolution reorganizing the Academic Assessment Council, which had previously been a committee of mostly associate deans, as a more inclusive body representing the faculty and administration in each college, plus appropriate representation of other units with an investment in student learning. The resolution also clarified the council's responsibilities and ongoing duties.²¹

The senate took this action during the EER phase, but it wasn't until after the conclusion of the WASC process in the spring of 2012 that the new Assessment Council began to meet regularly and develop a sense of direction and momentum. Under the leadership of Mary Pedersen, the Associate Vice Provost (AVP) for Academic Programs and Planning, the Assessment Council is meeting regularly and fulfilling its charge to "lead and coordinate campus assessment efforts."²² The AVP is the campus response to the WASC team's first recommendation, since her portfolio includes academic planning, program review, assessment, university advising, and faculty development.

One of the Assessment Council's earliest achievements was a decision to affirm an expectation that had been implied in program review, recommended by the campus EER report, and restated in the senate resolution, that all academic programs assess all of their program learning objectives (PLOs) during a single cycle of review.²³ To implement this expectation, the assessment council approved a policy on assessment planning and annual reporting by departments and colleges, which had also been implied by the senate

²⁰ WASC Visiting Team, "Report of the WASC Visiting Team: Capacity and Preparatory Review," 10-12 February 2010, 32-32.

²¹ Academic Senate, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA, "Resolution on Coordinated Campus Assessment Efforts," AS-735-11, adopted 31 May 2011.

²² Academic Senate, "Resolution on Coordinated Campus Assessment Efforts," attachment, n.p.

²³ The EER report recommended a single cycle of *program* review, usually six years; curiously, the senate resolution restated this as a single cycle of *WASC* review, or ten years.

resolution, and a format for doing so. This policy was subsequently approved by Provost Kathleen Enz-Finken.

More importantly, the Assessment Council put its imprimatur on the University/GE Assessment Plan (appendix [B.1](#)), which replaced the University Learning Objectives (ULO) Project whose results had been presented in the campus EER report; both are explained below. Perhaps as important has been the development of the Assessment Council as a well-integrated community of interest, which has been fully engaged with the results of the multiple assessments described below.

Assessment Needs. To better understand the challenges facing programs in their assessment efforts, the AVP developed a needs analysis survey that was conducted in AY 2013-14. Within each college, the survey was administered to each department chair and program assessment coordinator; the response rate was nearly 100%. The results suggested the following areas as the most challenging for departments and programs: deciding what PLOs to measure, identifying and collecting artifacts, determining direct and indirect assessment methods, engaging the faculty in the assessment process, locating and using technology for assessment data tracking and storage, benchmarking, and using the assessment results to make program improvements.

Although many departments are doing an excellent job of assessment and related program improvement, it was clear from the needs survey that others are still struggling to develop and execute a coherent, practical plan for assessing their PLOs. To address their needs, the AVP has hired a faculty assessment consultant who works with staff in the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology on assessment-related faculty development programs; the consultant also provides individual assessment support to departments. This team has designed and held a three-day series of Assessment Essentials workshops and plans to develop a more in-depth series of workshops for spring 2015 as well as a summer workshop on critical thinking (see below).

Assessment Policy. Every academic degree program at Cal Poly must have PLOs, which are published online in the Cal Poly Catalog. Each program must develop and execute a PLO-based assessment plan, which forms the basis for a significant section of the program review report. In addition, each program is supposed to report annually on PLO-based assessment activity, identifying which PLOs have been assessed, what methods were used, what results were obtained, and how the results were used to make program improvements. The annual reporting cycle is supposed to begin with programs reporting to the associate dean, who provides a summary college report to the AVP. The AVP and the Academic Assessment Council are supposed to review these reports and provide feedback to the programs and colleges.

Although some colleges have done a thorough and timely job of annual reporting, others have missed deadlines and/or complained about the process and timelines. Some programs find it a challenge to design a sustainable assessment plan, let alone to put it into effect and maintain an ongoing assessment effort. The AVP recognizes the problem and will work with the Assessment Council and Associate Deans to effect a solution, which may include an emphasis on assessment planning in program review, supported by a focused faculty development effort.

University/GE Assessment Plan

In its action letter of 3 July 2012, the WASC Commission commended Cal Poly for the ULO Project, which was intended to assess student achievement of the seven University Learning Objectives or ULOs. The commission also commended Cal Poly for the campus-wide effort to assess the educational effectiveness of the senior project, the university's signature capstone requirement for all of its undergraduates. The visiting team observed that "these efforts lead [sic] to important cross-unit conversations and collaborations on assessment that have not previously been part of Cal Poly's culture." The commission in turn noted that "projects like these position Cal Poly SLO as a leader in assessing the extent to which graduates have achieved learning outcomes in core undergraduate competencies at the time of graduation, which will be one of the primary foci of WASC's reaccreditation model beginning in 2013." The commission urged Cal Poly "to continue to undertake these kinds of assessment projects to better understand and support student learning and achievement and to learn how to promote integration of knowledge and skills at the undergraduate level."²⁴

The assessment of the senior project has in fact continued and is now reaching its final phase. Implemented through the vehicle of program review, this effort included an evaluation of the senior project itself using the [WASC Rubric for Assessing the Use of Capstone Experiences for Assessing Program Learning Outcomes\(PDF\)](#), as well as an assessment of masteryt level writing and critical thinking skills using the [University Expository Writing Rubric \(PDF\)](#) and the AAC&U's VALUE rubrics related to critical thinking. Although the assessment did not meet its original goal of providing institution level results, it has by all accounts been successful in promoting a programt level reconsideration of the effectiveness of the senior project.

In contrast, the ULO Project with its broad ambitions did not turn out to be a sustainable effort, especially during the recent recession, and it was put on hold while the EER report was being prepared. In the wake of this decision, Cal Poly sent a team to the 2011 WASC Retreat on Assessment in Practice. Committed to building on the experience of the ULO Project, the team welcomed the WASC announcement, made at a post-conference meeting with CSU representatives, of a renewed emphasis on the five core competencies — critical thinking, written communication, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and information literacy. This emphasis seemed to describe a more sustainable expectation for institution-level assessment, which quickly led to the idea of a more focused assessment plan based on the five core competencies, each of which would become the subject of an overlapping 3t year cycle of investigation, evaluation, and improvement (appendix [B.1](#)).

Cal Poly began to implement this plan in 2013, with the assessment of critical thinking that is now in the improvement phase. The direct results are presented in section 2 below, forming a triangle with the direct results of the most recent Collegiate Learning Assessment and the indirect results of the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement. Two other assessments have already begun, with written communication in the evaluation phase and quantitative reasoning in the investigation phase. See diagram on next page.

²⁴ Ralph A. Wolff, President, WASC, to Jeffrey A. Armstrong, President, Cal Poly, 3 July 2012, 3-4.

University/GE Assessment Plan (7-Year Plan)
WASC Core Competencies/University GE Learning Outcomes

Core Competencies	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking			→		
	Investigation	Evaluation	Improvement			
Written Communication		Written Communication			→	
		Investigation	Evaluation	Improvement		
Quantitative Reasoning			Quantitative Reasoning			→
			Investigation	Evaluation	Improvement	
Oral Communication				Oral Communication		
				Investigation	Evaluation	Improvement
Information Literacy				Information Literacy		
				Investigation	Evaluation	

Note: Assessment of each core competency is a three-year plan. When this cycle is complete, the assessment continues at the program-level with University/GE assessment continuing in a stream-lined manner.

2. University/GE Assessment of Critical Thinking

Investigation (AY 2012-13). The assessment began its three-year cycle with the establishment of the Critical Thinking Learning Community comprised of faculty from across disciplines. The learning community was initially charged with defining what critical thinking means at Cal Poly. Working with “The Delphi Report,”²⁵ the learning community identified five traits that should be accounted for when assessing for critical thinking:

- Trait 1: Purpose
- Trait 2: Analysis of Problem/Issue
- Trait 3: Credibility of Sources/Source Material
- Trait 4: Conclusions/Solutions
- Trait 5: Self-Assessment

The plan was to assess for critical thinking via written argumentative papers collected from students in 100-level, GE Area A3 courses (Reasoning, Argumentation, and Writing) and from students in 400-level, discipline-specific courses. The overall intention was to examine cross-sectional differences between students taking courses at these different levels. In spring 2014, this work was given to Professor Brenda Helmbrecht of the English Department.

Evaluation (AY 2013-14). Over 700 student papers from two GE Area A3 courses (ENGL 145 and ENGL 149; both courses requiring ENGL 134 English course completion) and 600 papers from 400-level courses in five colleges (CAED, CLA, OCOB, CAFES, and CENG) were collected. To determine whether the instructors’ assignments elicited argumentative writing, Professor Helmbrecht collected and reviewed the assignments in advance. Nearly every assignment was deemed acceptable for the assessment project.

The learning community developed a five-point critical thinking rubric (appendix [B.2](#)) based on the five traits identified above, on the language in “The Delphi Report,” and on the Cal Poly University Writing Rubric, which was developed for the University Learning Objectives Assessment Project that ran from 2008 to 2011. The critical thinking rubric is analytic in the sense that it assesses for five traits separately as opposed to giving an artifact a single holistic score. The rubric scores range from 0 for “Poor/No Attainment” to 4 for “Superior Attainment.”

The rubric was tested and refined on two separate occasions by using essays from the pool. Professor Helmbrecht finalized the rubric with the assistance of Matt Luskey, the Writing Coordinator for the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, and Dawn Janke, the Director of the Writing and Rhetoric Center.

²⁵ Peter A. Facione, “Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction” (Millbrae CA: California Academic Press, 1990). Also known as “The Delphi Report,” it articulates the findings of a two-year effort to make a “systematic inquiry into the current state of CT and CT assessment.” The report can be found at https://assessment.aas.duke.edu/documents/Delphi_Report.pdf.

Assessing for Trait 5 proved somewhat challenging, as most academic papers do not require self-assessment, yet this trait was deemed an essential component of critical thinking by the learning community. As such, instructors were asked to include a short reflection with the assignment, using the following language:

When submitting your paper, please include a typed, one-page (minimum) "Writer's Memo" wherein you reflect on the choices you made as you wrote your essay. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of your essay? What process did you go through to write the essay? Please address anything that can help your reader better understand the approach you took when composing your essay.

Depending on the level of adherence to this language in the assignment, some essays were not scored on Trait 5.

A scoring session with 29 readers from across campus was led by Professor Helmbrecht and Professor Josh Machamer, chair of the General Education Governance Board, on June 27, 2014. Readers were comprised of faculty members who had submitted their students' work for assessment, members of the learning community, members of the Academic Assessment Council, and other interested faculty members. Readers were each paid \$200 for their participation.

In preparation for the scoring session, faculty members read and scored three essays in advance, so that they could become familiar with the rubric's language. Their scores were collected upon arrival and used for norming purposes. After discussing each of the three essays, readers scored and discussed a fourth.

Sampling took the form of a random selection of entire course sections. In most cases, essays for an entire class section were scored.

After norming and sampling, readers were split into two groups; one assessed the GE Area A3 papers and the other assessed the 400-level work. Assessing the papers in two rooms helped alleviate the possibility of a bias in scoring that might have resulted from reading an essay written by a first-year student back-to-back with an essay written by a senior.

During the four-hour scoring session, a total of 268 essays were each scored twice—96 from ENGL145, 50 from ENGL 149, and 122 from 400-level courses. Notably, each essay was accompanied by its assignment.

Analysis of Results. A summary of critical findings is provided here; additional analysis is included in appendix [B.3](#).

As described above, each student paper was read twice. However, there were sometimes sizeable discrepancies between the two resulting scores and the correlation coefficients — one measure of inter-rater reliability — were generally quite low (<.6), as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients

Trait 1 Purpose	Trait 2 Analysis	Trait 3 Credibility Source	Trait 4 Conclusions	Trait 5 Self Assessment
.195	.271	.226	.265	.338

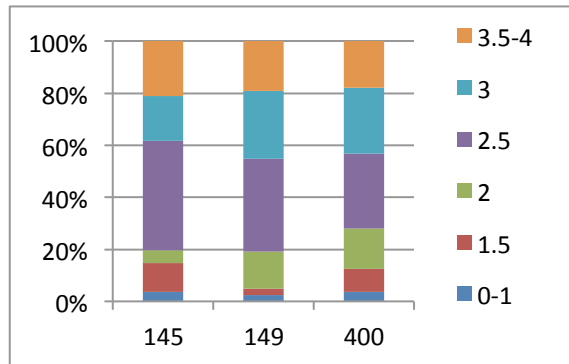
To adjust for the different scores, the decision was made to remove any scores where the discrepancy was larger than one (e.g., a 2/4 split) and to average the two scores for the remaining papers. For example, a 1.5 indicates that the student's paper received a 1 and a 2 on a single trait, and a score of 2 indicates that the paper received a 2 and a 2, any 1/3 splits having been removed.

The tables and graphs show the percentage distributions of these average scores for the five traits by class; the three lowest and two highest score categories were grouped together. The sample sizes are given in the first row; the numbers vary due to the removal of the discrepant papers on that trait.

Table/Graph 3

Distribution of Scores for Trait 1- Purpose

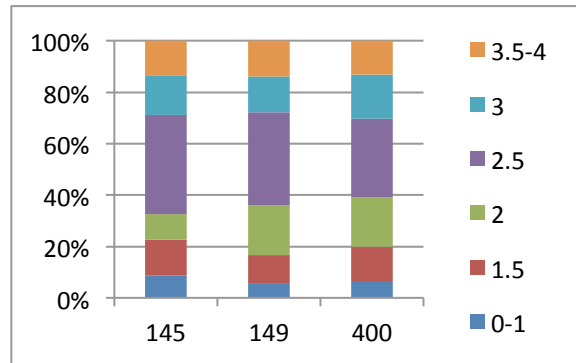
TRAIT 1	81	42	111
Course	145	149	400
0-1	3.70	2.38	3.60
1.5	11.11	2.38	9.01
2	4.94	14.29	15.32
2.5	41.98	35.71	28.83
3	17.28	26.19	25.23
3.5-4	20.99	19.05	18.02
Average	2.62	2.70	2.61



Table/Graph 4

Distribution of Scores for Trait 2- Analysis of Problem

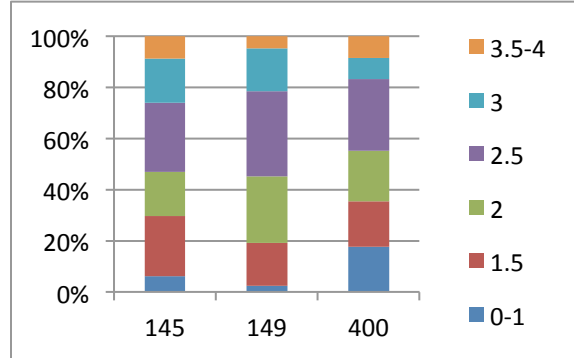
TRAIT 2	80	36	115
Course	145	149	400
0-1	8.75	5.56	6.09
1.5	13.75	11.11	13.91
2	10.00	19.44	19.13
2.5	38.75	36.11	30.43
3	15.00	13.89	17.39
3.5-4	13.75	13.89	13.04
Average	2.41	2.42	2.02



Table/Graph 5

Distribution of Scores for Trait 3- Credibility of Source

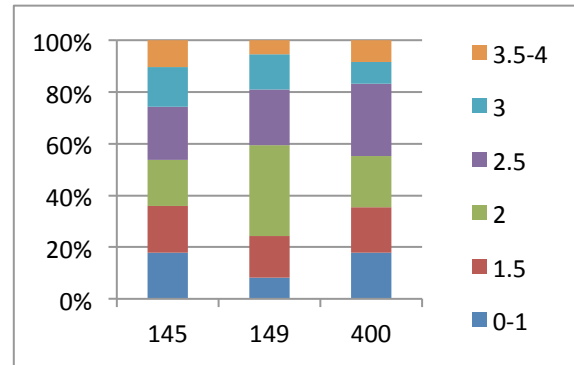
TRAIT 3	81	42	107
Course	145	149	400
0-1	6.17	2.38	17.76
1.5	23.46	16.67	17.76
2	17.28	26.19	19.63
2.5	27.16	33.33	28.04
3	17.28	16.67	8.41
3.5-4	8.64	4.76	8.41
Average	2.25	2.29	2.07



Table/Graph 6

Distribution of Scores for Trait 4- Conclusions

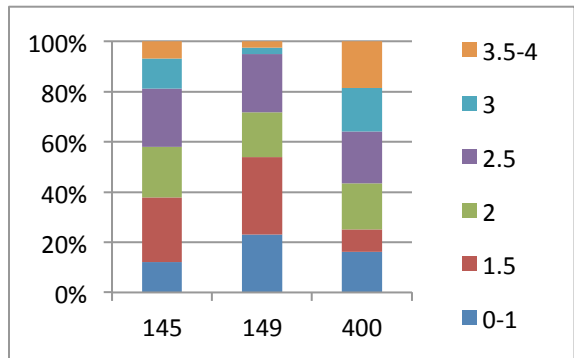
TRAIT 4	78	37	107
Course	145	149	400
0-1	17.95	8.11	17.76
1.5	17.95	16.22	17.76
2	17.95	35.14	19.63
2.5	20.51	21.62	28.04
3	15.38	13.51	8.41
3.5-4	10.26	5.41	8.41
Average	2.12	2.15	2.07



Table/Graph 7

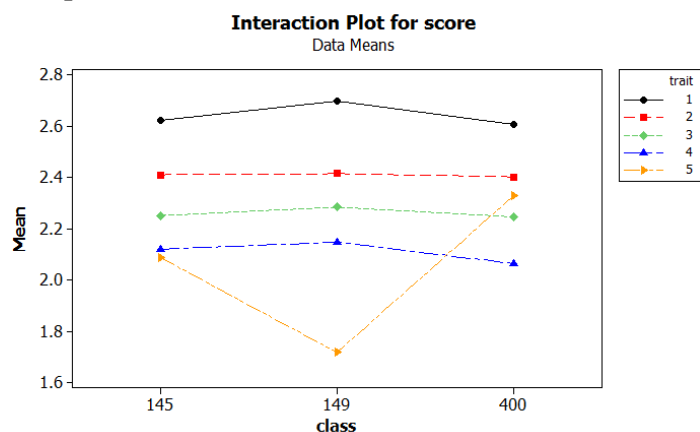
Distribution of Scores for Trait 5- Self Assessment

TRAIT 5	74	39	92
Course	145	149	400
0-1	12.16	23.08	16.30
1.5	25.68	30.77	8.70
2	20.27	17.95	18.48
2.5	22.97	23.08	20.65
3	12.16	2.56	17.39
3.5-4	6.76	2.56	18.48
Average	2.09	1.72	2.33



Chi-square tests do not reveal any statistically significant differences in the distribution of scores until Trait 5 (p-value < .001), with generally lower scores by the ENGL 149 students, almost all CENG majors. Standard deviations are roughly 0.7; sample sizes tend to be around 80, 40, 110 for each class group, with fewer graded papers for Trait 5; and standard errors are around 0.08. The average Trait 5 score for the 400-level courses was 2.00 for CENG students and 2.44 for non-CENG students (indicating that the gap in Trait 5 scores for the CENG majors narrowed a bit from ENG 149 to the 400-level course).

Graph 8



Combining students across the class levels, a repeated-measures ANOVA (analysis of variance) compared the scores on the five traits. Trait 1 was significantly higher than all the other traits; Trait 2 was significantly higher than Traits 3, 4, and 5; Trait 3 was significantly higher than Traits 4 and 5.

Improvement (AY 2014-15). To kick off this phase of the assessment, the provost sponsored a faculty development opportunity in the form of a Fall 2014 visit by Dr. Peter A. Facione, author of “The Delphi Report” on critical thinking, and his colleague and co-author, Dr. Carol Ann Gittens. They held a general session on critical thinking along with two discipline-specific workshops.

Planning is now under way for the presentation of the assessment results at a spring series of meetings with the deans, associate deans, and Academic Senate, as well as a joint meeting of the faculty members in Communications Studies, English, and Philosophy who are responsible for teaching foundation-level critical-thinking skills. The latter is especially important, as it is intended to address a structural problem, whereby GE faculty members who teach in the same area but reside in different departments do not meet to discuss their common concerns and responsibilities. It is also intended to begin an ongoing review of the GE objectives and criteria, which were established in 2000 and have not been revised since then.

These meetings are intended to promote an engagement with the results, of course, but also to prepare the ground for a multiday summer workshop on course and assignment design for critical thinking, which will be organized by the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology.

Success of Actions Taken. Because the critical thinking assessment project was the first of its kind at Cal Poly, it has always been regarded as a pilot. Although the results should establish a critical thinking benchmark for graduating seniors, there is still much to consider before the next campus assessment of critical thinking:

- It became clear that assignment design is an essential factor in assessing for critical thinking. Some assignments provide students with a great deal of structure and guidelines, whereas others are more open-ended and give students room to respond in idiosyncratic

ways. As such, some of the results could be an artifact of the assignment design, and assignments that explicitly build critical thinking into their outcomes may elicit better responses from students. Therefore, it seems prudent to work with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology to offer workshops to help faculty build critical thinking into their assignments and rubrics with greater intentionality.

- Working with a more standardized assessment tool in future critical thinking assessment efforts may prove advantageous. The variance in the assignments makes assessment more challenging, so perhaps embedding standardized assignments into classes and/or working with the results of the Writing Proficiency Exam should be explored.
- Better understanding where critical thinking happens in the curriculum as well as where it could happen, seems essential. At present, determining how critical thinking is scaffolded in the curriculum *after* the GE Area A3 courses is also a key to ensuring that students continue to develop their skills throughout their education.
- Triangulating the results of this assessment, the Collegiate Learning Assessment, and the National Survey of Student Engagement will help flesh out the campus's understanding of students' critical thinking skills.

3. Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA/CLA+) is a standardized institutional assessment of higher-order thinking skills developed by the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) designed to test for critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication skills. The exam uses a performance task paired with a writing task (through 2012) or selected-response questions (first introduced in 2013). The structure of the exam compares a cohort of freshmen, who are tested in fall quarter, with a cohort of native seniors, who are tested in winter and spring quarters. The minimum sample size according to CAE is 100 students per group. The analysis provided by CAE uses “the seniors’ entering academic ability (EAA) scores and the mean CLA+ performance of freshmen at the school” to predict expected gains in performance. Among the results presented in the institutional report are scores on the sub-tests, a “value-added score” based on expected gains, and percentile rankings.²⁶

CLA at Cal Poly. Although the exam was introduced in 2002, Cal Poly began participating in AY 2007-08. Since that time, the university has experimented with different ways of recruiting and engaging participants, especially at the senior level. Some notable highlights include the fluctuation in scores and percentile rankings, which are probably artifacts of the variations in recruiting methods and in the numbers of students taking the test (appendix [B.4](#)). In general, one can see that, with one exception, seniors scored higher than freshmen, though the percentile scores were sometimes lower, with value added scores most often computed at “Near” the predicted performance (three of the six administrations). For two years the seniors performed “At” or “Above” the predicted performance level.

AY 2013-14 Test Administration. For this cycle, the CLA eliminated the writing task and substituted a 30-minute set of multiple-choice, selected-response questions. All students took both components of the assessment, rather than only half of each cohort as in previous administrations. The revised test is referred to as the “CLA+.”

Independently, Cal Poly took a critical look at its recruitment methods. These varied considerably across years and may have been a significant factor in the numbers of students participating and the variability of scores from test administration to test administration. The recruitment methods became even more of a concern after a particularly problematic administration in AY 2012-13. Seniors, who were recruited from major classes, scored below 1200 overall, exhibited the largest variability for time on task, had percentiles below 50% for the writing task, and performed poorly in other areas, all of which contributed to a below-expected value-added score. For the AY 2013-14 cohort, freshmen were invited to participate during the Week of Welcome, the university’s fall orientation program. Seniors (defined as native students within one to two quarters of graduation, as per the CLA’s definition) were invited to “compete” for cash prizes given to the highest scorers, with the further incentive of being able to add a CLA-provided “badge” to their resumes or LinkedIn profiles. They were tested in April, at the beginning of the spring quarter.

²⁶ CAE, “Spring 2014 CLA+ Results: Institutional Report” (CAE, New York), 11.

The institutional report (appendix [B.5](#)) shows Cal Poly's CLA+ scores for AY 2013i 14. Section 1 shows the mean scores. Section 2 shows the mean mastery level of freshmen and seniors as being "Proficient," with more seniors scoring at the higher end of that scale compared to freshmen. Section 3 shows Cal Poly seniors performing "Near" the expected value-added levels. It should be noted in this regard that the potential for ceiling effects is high, given that the university is among the top scorers in the sample. Yet Table 1 shows that, even with the entering academic ability being higher for freshmen (1258 vs. 1191), seniors scored higher than freshmen on the CLA+ as a whole (1218 vs. 1192) and on each of its two parts. Section 4 shows the subscale scores broken down by class level. There is evidence of forward movement for the higher-level skills of analysis and problem solving as well as writing effectiveness. The skill of writing mechanics showed less of a change, which is consistent with the results of Cal Poly's own institutional writing assessment.

The university is guardedly optimistic that efforts to create a more engaged sample as compared to past test administrations were successful; for example, see the time on task results for both exams (appendix [B.4](#)) and the effort and engagement scores (Section 5), all of which showed good comparability between freshmen and seniors. In addition, it was found that the recruitment of students was simpler and more straightforward than in past years and yielded similar results. Moreover, there is some evidence that the university may be able to better adjust the demographic profile by controlling the number of test "slots" available to each college. The goal is to see whether the university can replicate or even improve upon the pattern of scores in future test administrations. The intention is to establish a somewhat stable baseline and then use the CLA+ results in combination with the NSSE, program review, and institutional assessment results to implement substantive changes to positively affect critical thinking.

4. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The **National Survey of Student Engagement** (NSSE) collects information about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that have been demonstrated to enhance learning and personal development. The survey items represent empirically confirmed best practices in undergraduate education. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and the student's perception of what they are gaining from attending their university. Peer comparisons — Cal Poly uses all NSSE institutions, the CSU campuses, and a select group of polytechnics — are available for ten Engagement Indicators, six High Impact Practices, and all individual survey questions. (See appendix [B.6](#) for a concise report.)

Survey questions relevant to the assessment of critical thinking (Q2, 4, and 17 in the 2014 survey) were selectively reviewed for triangulation with the other critical-thinking assessment efforts (CLA+ and University/GE assessment). Results for these selected survey questions are presented below.

NSSE 2014: Questions Relevant to the Assessment of Critical Thinking

Question 17. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? c. Thinking critically and analytically. Question 17 explores the dimension of magnitude, with parts that address essential cognitive skills — written and oral communication, critical thinking, working with others, etc.

When asked how much their experience contributed to their “Thinking critically and analytically,” 88% of 727 Cal Poly seniors answered “Quite a bit” or “Very much,” and 12% answered “Very little” or “Some” (table 8). Comparing senior to first-year responses suggests an improved experience for seniors, as 75% out of a total of 486 first-year students answered “Quite a bit” or “Very much,” and 25% answered “Very little” or “Some.”

The Cal Poly senior mean response was 3.4, with 1 being “Very little” and 4 being “Very much” (table 9). This was on par with the means of the NSSE peer groups — the same as the Polytechnic mean of 3.4 and significantly higher ($p < .001$) than the CSU or NSSE means of 3.3 each but each with a small effect size ($< .3$). The Cal Poly first-year mean response was 3.1 — the same as the CSU, Polytechnic, and NSSE means of 3.1 each.

Comparing the results of question 17, part c, on NSSE 2014 and the equivalent question 11, part e, on NSSE 2008 and 2011 shows a decline in the number of first-year and senior students responding to the survey. It also shows an improvement in results from 2008 to 2011 and a setback from 2011 to 2014 that was more dramatic for first-year students. In each year, however, seniors reported a greater contribution from their experiences than first-year students.

A comparison of the Cal Poly mean results from the same three years shows the same hump, with the Cal Poly first-year and senior means both exceeding the corresponding peer means. The difference in each case was statistically significant, but the effect size was small. The same could be said in several other cases.

Question 2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

Of all the questions in the NSSE instrument, question 17 addresses critical thinking most directly. There are, however, two other questions — 2 and 4 — that address aspects of critical thinking.

Question 2 explores the dimension of frequency, with four parts related to critical thinking:

- Include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments.
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue.
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.
- Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept.

With two exceptions, the results for both seniors and first-year students were usually in the same broad range, with approximately 60% responding "Quite a bit" or "Very much," and approximately 40% responding "Very little" or "Some" (table 10).

However, when asked how often they "include diverse perspectives," 45% out of a total of 883 seniors answered "Quite a bit" or "Very much," and 55% answered "Very little" or "Some." This was the weakest result for seniors among the four parts.

When asked how often they "learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept," 70% out of a total of 878 seniors answered "Quite a bit" or "Very much," and 30% answered "Very little" or "Some." This was the strongest result for seniors among the four items.

For seniors, the Cal Poly mean responses were in the 2.5-2.9 range, with 1 being "Never" and 4 being "Very often." The lowest mean was in response to "Include diverse perspectives." There were some statistically significant differences with the CSU, Polytechnic, and NSSE peer means, but they all had small effect sizes.

For first-year students, the Cal Poly mean responses were in the somewhat wider 2.3-2.9 range. Again, the lowest mean of 2.3 was in response to "Include diverse perspectives." There were some statistically significant differences with the CSU, Polytechnic, and NSSE peer means, but they all had small effect sizes with the exception of "Include diverse perspectives." This was significantly below the CSU mean of 2.6, with a more than small effect size.

A comparison of mean responses to question 2, "Include diverse perspectives," on NSSE 2008 to the equivalent part of question 1 on NSSE 2011 and 2014 shows a consistent pattern (table 11). The Cal Poly means are lower than the peer means in every case but one: In 2014, the Cal Poly mean of 2.5 was significantly greater than the Polytechnic mean of 2.4, but the effect size was small.

Question 4. During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following? Question 4 also explores the dimension of frequency, with parts comprising most of Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive skills:

- Memorizing course material [*knowing*].
- *Applying* [institutional emphasis] facts, theories or methods to practical problems or new situations.
- *Analyzing* an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts.
- *Evaluating* a point of view, decision, or information source.
- Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information [*synthesizing*].

These skills are all aspects of critical thinking, with the exception of the lowest-order “memorizing.” When asked about “analyzing,” 78% out of a total of 869 seniors answered “Quite a bit” or “Very much,” and 23% answered “Very little” or “Some” (table 12; percentages do not always add up to 100%). Comparing senior to first-year responses suggests a somewhat improved experience for seniors, as 73% out of a total of 600 first-year students answered “Quite a bit” or “Very much,” and 27% answered “Very little” or “Some.”

Similarly, when asked about “forming a new idea or understanding,” 69% out of a total of 864 seniors answered “Quite a bit” or “Very much,” and 31% answered “Very little” or “Some.” Comparing senior to first-year responses, 63% out of a total of 600 first-year students answered “Quite a bit” or “Very much,” and 38% answered “Very little” or “Some.” The two other parts relating to critical thinking show little difference between senior and first-year responses.

The Cal Poly senior and first-year means for each the four parts of question 2 relating to critical thinking were similar to the means of the CSU, Polytechnic, and NSSE peer groups. Some of the Cal Poly means were significantly higher or lower than the peer means, but in each such case the effect sizes were small.

Table 8: A Frequency Comparison of Q17.c on NSSE 2014 and Q11.e on NSSE 2008

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? c. Thinking critically and analytically

Year	First Year Responses			Senior Responses		
	N	+	-	n	+	-
2008	1223	83%	17%	1662	89%	12%
2011	544	87%	13%	1379	91%	9%
2014	486	75%	25%	727	88%	12%

Note: A “+” response includes “Quite a bit” or “Very much.” A “-” includes “Very little” or “Some.”

Table 9: A Mean Comparison of Q17.c on NSSE 2014 and Q11.e on NSSE 2008

Year	First Year				Seniors			
	Cal Poly	CSU	Poly-tech	NSSE	Cal Poly	CSU	Poly-tech	NSSE
2008	3.21	3.18	3.23	3.21	3.36	3.29	3.38	3.36
2011	3.30	3.24	3.26	3.25	3.49	3.34	3.40	3.37
2014	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.40	3.30	3.40	3.30

Note: In 2008 and 2011, NSSE calculated mean responses to the second decimal place; in 2014, NSSE calculated means to the first decimal place.

Table 10: A Frequency and Mean Comparison of Question 2 Parts on NSSE 2014
Q 2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

Question Part	First Year				Seniors			
	N	+	-	Mean	N	+	-	Mean
c. Include diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments	621	62%	39%	2.3	883	45%	55%	2.5
d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views	619	61%	39%	2.7	883	60%	40%	2.8
e. Tried to better understand someone else's views	616	66%	35%	2.8	878	66%	33%	2.9
f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	610	66%	34%	2.9	878	70%	30%	2.9

Note: A "+" response includes "Quite a bit" or "Very much." A "-" response includes "Very little" or "Some." Percentages do not always add up to 100%, indicating rounding errors

Table 11: A Mean Comparison of Q2.c on NSSE 2014 and Q1.e on NSSE 2008 and 2011
Q 2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

Year	First Year				Seniors			
	Cal Poly	CSU	Poly-tech	NSSE	Cal Poly	CSU	Poly-tech	NSSE
2008	2.44	2.90	2.64	2.79	2.46	2.91	2.55	2.82
2011	2.53	2.94	2.65	2.79	2.52	2.91	2.60	2.84
2014	2.30	2.60	2.40	2.60	2.50	2.70	2.40	2.70

Table 12: A Frequency and Mean Comparison of Question 4 Parts on NSSE 2014
Q4. During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?

Question Part	First Year				Seniors			
	N	+	-	Mean	N	+	-	Mean
Applying facts, theories, or methods	601	81%	19%	3.1	872	82%	18%	3.2
Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning	600	73%	27%	3.0	869	78%	23%	3.1
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	597	62%	38%	2.8	867	63%	37%	2.8
Forming a new idea or understanding	600	63%	38%	2.8	864	69%	31%	2.9

5. Action Plan- Update on the Assessment of Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

Success of Actions Taken and Evidence to Support Progress

- **WASC Team Recommendations.** Cal Poly has responded to the WASC team recommendations on clarifying assessment leadership and reviewing the role of faculty governance in academic decision-making with the successful reorganization of the Academic Assessment Council under the leadership of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Planning. The council has clarified assessment policy regarding program learning objectives as well as assessment planning and reporting. The Vice Provost has conducted an assessment needs assessment; a faculty assessment consultant has worked with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT) to provide assessment-related faculty development opportunities as well as individual assessment support to departments.
- **Academic Program Review**
 - Cal Poly is completing the campus-wide assessment of the senior project. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the effort has been a success in promoting program-level improvements to the required capstone experience.
 - Cal Poly is piloting the assessment of Learn by Doing as recommended by the WASC visiting team. A rubric to assess its educational effectiveness has been developed and is being tested in the Honors Program.
- **University/GE Assessment Plan.** Cal Poly is learning from previous experience by implementing the University/GE Assessment Plan focusing on the five core competencies and by making continuous improvements to the administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA, CLA+).
 - **Critical Thinking**
 - The results suggest that, with one exception, Cal Poly students are performing at a level somewhere between “Average Attainment” and “Good Attainment” on the campus rubric.
 - There are no significant differences between the performance of students completing 100- and 400-level courses with the exception of students in ENGL 149 on Trait 5: Self Reflection.
 - Moving up the rubric, scores were significantly higher; moving down, scores were significantly lower.
 - One college group had consistently higher averages than the others. This finding needs to be treated with caution, but it suggests investigating the impact of assessment design.
- **Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)**
 - Cal Poly seniors are demonstrating value added by performing near expected levels.
 - Cal Poly is publishing the results online at CollegePortraits.org.
- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).** On questions related to critical thinking, Cal Poly students report experiences that are comparable to those of their CSU, polytechnic, and NSSE peers, with the exception of Q2 on “Include diverse perspectives.”

Remaining Issues and Challenges

- **Assessment Capacity.** Although progress is being made, there is still a need to develop assessment capacity all levels, as evidenced by the limited success of program assessment planning and annual reporting efforts at the college and department levels.
- **University/GE Assessment of Critical Thinking**
 - Cal Poly needs to pay greater attention to methodological issues like rubric design, inter-rater reliability, and sample size.
 - Results of the University/GE assessment and NSSE both suggest possible areas of improvement in course and assignment design.
 - There is a need for greater intentionality in teaching, learning, and assessing critical thinking. One strong possibility is the use of signature assignments in foundation courses like ENGL 145 and 149.
- **Collegiate Learning Assessment.** The administration of the exam will continue to be an institutional concern, given the evidence of its impact on value-added results.
- **Organizational Learning.** Internally produced, formative assessments are “messy” in the sense that they tend pose methodological challenges and produce highly qualified but actionable results, i.e. results that can inspire improvements to curriculum and pedagogy. Externally produced, summative assessments like the CLA tend to be methodologically “neat” but do not produce actionable results.

Responses and Timelines

- **Academic Program Review.** In Fall 2015, Academic Programs and Planning will begin to implement a campus-wide assessment of Learn by Doing through the vehicle of program review. The assessment will continue until Spring 2022.
- **University/GE Assessment Plan**
 - Cal Poly will continue to focus on the five core competencies.
 - **Critical Thinking.** Cal Poly will complete the *improvement* phase by supporting a number of faculty development opportunities:
 - A visit in spring 2015 by a national expert in assignment design, sponsored by the English Department, CTLT, and Academic Programs.
 - A weeklong critical thinking workshop in summer 2015, which will support improvements in teaching, learning, and assessing critical thinking.
 - **Expository Writing.** Cal Poly will complete the *evaluation* phase, including artifact collection and scoring, by summer 2015; the university will conduct the *improvement* phase during AY 2015-16.
 - **Quantitative Reasoning.** Cal Poly will complete the *investigation* phase, including curriculum research and rubric development, by spring 2015; the university will conduct the *evaluation* phase in AY 2015-16 AY and the *improvement* phase in AY 2016-17.

- Cal Poly will establish clear benchmarks for critical thinking based on the current assessment results, with the goal of improving student performance by the time of the next scheduled assessment in five years.
 - Students in ENGL 145 and 149 will consistently perform above the currently attained trait levels
 - Students in 400-level courses will perform above the trait level of students in ENGL 145 and 149.
- **Collegiate Learning Assessment.** Cal Poly will continue to improve the annual administration of the test and dissemination of the test results online as a clear and accessible measure of value-added student achievement.
- **National Survey of Student Engagement.** Cal Poly will continue to administer the NSSE, FSSE, and BCSSE every three years and find ways to make effective use of the results, including triangulating them with the results of the ULO/GE Assessment Plan.

Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution

Instructions: This brief section should identify any other significant changes that have occurred or issues that have arisen at the institution (e.g., changes in key personnel, addition of major new programs, modifications in the governance structure, unanticipated challenges, or significant financial results) that are not otherwise described in the preceding section. This information will help the Interim Report Committee panel gain a clearer sense of the current status of the institution and understand the context in which the actions of the institution discussed in the previous section have taken place.

After one year of serving as our new President and six months of extensive consultations, Dr. Jeffrey Armstrong adopted a final version of the Cal Poly strategic plan, entitled Vision 2022. This document outlines a foundation of guiding principles for Cal Poly, as well as a set of strategic objectives to be achieved over the life of the plan (see <http://president.calpoly.edu/vision2022/>).

Vision 2022 is providing the framework for the current development of Cal Poly's new academic plan for enrollment and the update of the university's master plan. The process for each, beginning in fall 2014, has been wide-ranging, involving a broad engagement of internal and external stakeholders, and final reports are expected in winter 2016. Participants have examined numerous questions including: Who will our students be in 2030 and what will they need to learn to be successful? What new programs should be considered? How does Learn by Doing and the teacher-scholar model remain at the core? The updated master plan will set the locations, sizes and types of land use, as well as the facilities and circulation systems necessary to support the University's mission.

The implementation of Vision 2022 is assured by the completion of a university-wide leadership transition that now includes the new Vice President of Student Affairs, new deans in five of the six colleges, and the reorganization of Graduate Education and the International Center, including the appointment of new directors.

Meanwhile, the university has grown its research capacity with the addition of three new units — the Cybersecurity Center, the Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy, and the Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center. In addition, private funding has been provided to investigate the feasibility of a new school of hospitality — the second in the CSU system.

The university intends to grow its residential capacity with the construction of a new 1450-bed residential complex, planned for opening in fall 2018. (The project is already approved.) The new first-year student housing site will allow the university to house 45 percent of the student body – compared to 36 percent now, creating a more residentially-focused campus. Recent research into student success at Cal Poly reveals that students who live on campus through their second year remain for the third year at a rate of 94%, compared to the 83% retention among those who live on campus for only one year. Furthermore, an extra year on campus has been shown to virtually eliminate the achievement gap for students facing economic challenges.

This year, the Associated Students Inc. (ASI) launched a new planning process to guide the development and enhancement of the facilities that serve Cal Poly students outside the

classroom. The process began in spring of 2014 with a student survey assessing how ASI facilities – including the Julian A. McPhee University Union, Rec Center, Sports Complex, and Orfalea Family and ASI Children’s Center – were meeting the students’ needs. The initial results showed that most students agree that a facilities plan should start with the UU, a facility considered by many to be the “living room” of campus. This critical student life hub hasn’t been significantly upgraded since it was built in the 1970s.

At the time of the last WASC self-study, the university's finances were strained along with those of the state and the system. The economic recovery has brought a partial recovery in state support for higher education, which has been buttressed at Cal Poly by a student vote in spring 2012 to support the new Student Success Fee. As approved by the president, the fee provides resources for additional class sections and increased student support services. This was the third time that Cal Poly students voted to support their education with a campus-based fee — a sure measure of their enthusiasm for Cal Poly and their confidence in the value of a Cal Poly education.

Finally, Vision 2022 depends on the partnerships our community builds with those who support our mission. The university is in the early stages of a comprehensive fundraising campaign that has already met with success. The campaign is meeting its goals, which include sizable donations in support of new space for research and instruction — sure signs that external stakeholders share in student enthusiasm and confidence.

Concluding Statement

Instructions: Reflect on how the institutional responses to the issues raised by the Commission have had an impact upon the institution, including future steps to be taken.

Few people leap at the chance to undergo an accreditation review, with all the effort and resources that it requires. Nevertheless, Cal Poly continues to find the WASC process a useful and meaningful one that can focus campus attention on high standards of institutional performance and on difficult institutional challenges, such as graduation achievement gaps and the adoption of meaningful, sustainable assessment measures. The process of preparing this interim report has already raised awareness, provoked discussion, and even, to some degree, mobilized a response to the issues addressed in the report.

An effective response to institutional challenges depends on the availability of clear and transparent institutional data; the regular analysis of these data, guided by strategic research questions; the implementation of correctly targeted interventions; and the evaluation of these interventions using evidence-based milestones. In addressing the primary WASC-defined issues in this report, "progress in addressing diversity" and "an update on the assessment of undergraduate learning outcomes," the data analysis was complicated by the complexity of the data definitions. Significant time was required to compile the desired data and present it in a clear and meaningful way.

There are two very significant steps that will be implemented immediately. The first step will be to redefine the data definitions to match the research questions and other specific campus needs. A team of campus leaders will begin to meet regularly to define the data needs and definitions to make clear data readily available. Previously, Institutional Research was not adequately staffed to meet campus needs but two new analyst positions have been filled to expand the capacity of this office. The addition of two analysts in units other than Institutional Research will improve the overall capacity of the institution.

The second step will be to institute a regular annual analysis and interpretation of the student, staff and faculty profiles as well as the student learning and success data by a responsible party or parties, who will also be responsible for identifying next steps. As an example, standard student success data is provided yearly by Institutional Research, but routine analysis of specific subpopulations will be required to monitor the effectiveness of specific interventions targeted at reducing graduation gaps. Recent experience suggests that this kind of process would be best carried out by the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Planning in partnership with the Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion, both working with their constituencies — the deans, associates deans, college advisors, and members of the Inclusive Excellence Council.

Additionally, Cal Poly has set an ambitious target to improve four-year graduation rates. Achievement of this target will be impeded, at least on paper, by the fact that Cal Poly's official four-year graduation rates are skewed by the inclusion of students in five-year-bachelor and blended degree programs. Other data challenges include student and faculty counts being similarly skewed by the fact that students off campus and faculty members on

leave disappear from the numbers and then reappear when they return to their studies or positions. Furthermore, there are peculiarities in the ways that ethnicity is recorded if a person reports more than one category, and the official presentation of such results does not always match that of the CSU, which reports to IPEDS. A comparison of the way these entities report the diversity of students, staff, and faculty makes it clear that the university needs to rethink its reporting structure to include "cross tabbing" of the results, specifically for gender, ethnicity, and income levels if it wants to address achievement gaps more effectively.

Cal Poly is committed to making these analytical improvements, just as it committed to growing the campus culture of evidence and inquiry as described in WASC criteria 4.1, 4.2, 4.3. The university is trying to ask the right questions; to provide appropriate answers, it will need to make sure that the evidence is completely valid and reliable.