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February 1, 2018

Lori Williams, Vice President
WASC Senior College and University Commission

Dear Vice President Williams:

Pursuant to the WSCUC Action Letter dated January 29, 2016, California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) submits this progress report centered around two questions: 1) define student success and 2) provide two examples of institutional initiatives, programs, or projects that have been effective in promoting student success and learning.

1. Define Student Success (accounting for both completion and achievement of student learning outcomes), given the mission, values, and programs offered, and the characteristics of the students being served (CFRs 1.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.10, 2.13)

CSULB identifies student success as key to its Mission and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) in the form of a highly-valued degree [CFRs 1.2, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.4, 2.6]. CSULB's Mission states:

California State University Long Beach is a diverse, student-centered, globally-engaged public university committed to providing highly-valued undergraduate and graduate educational opportunities through superior teaching, research, creative activity and service for the people of California and the world.

This mission of student success in the form of a highly-valued degree results in CSULB's graduates attaining the following outcomes:

- Well-prepared with communication, numeracy and critical thinking skills to successfully join the workforce of California and the world or to pursue advanced study;
- Critically and ethically engaged in global and local issues;
- Knowledgeable and respectful of the diversity of individuals, groups, and cultures;
- Accomplished at integrating the skills of a liberal education with disciplinary or professional competency;
- Skilled in collaborative problem-solving, research, and creative activity.

These markers of student success are embedded in the tripartite strategic institutional goals and priorities for the future: Intellectual Achievement, Inclusive Excellence, and the Public Good ([CSULB's Strategic Priorities and Goals, 2017-2020](#)). This Strategic Plan outlines multiple frameworks of student success across all divisions of the university. Since student success is measured through the entire campus experience, inter-divisional cooperation is essential. The chart below outlines the ways in which the five divisions of the university are working together to meet strategic goals and to ensure the best physical, emotional, fiscal, and intellectual environment to truly represent CSULB's mission and vision:

Campus Goals*	Intellectual Achievement	Inclusive Excellence	Public Good
Graduation Initiative	AA^, SA	AA, SA	AA, SA
Student Engagement	AA, SA	AA, SA	AA, SA
Faculty and Staff Success	AA, DAF	AA, DAF, SA	AA
Enrollment Planning and Management	AA	AA, SA	
Facilities and Sustainable Development	DAF		DAF, SA
Fiscal Resources and Quality Improvement	DAF	DAF	
Academic and Information Technology Services	AA, IT, SA		
Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities	AA	AA	AA
External Support and Community Relations	URD	URD	URD, SA
Auxiliary Organizations	SA		SA
Emergency Preparedness			DAF, SA

*source: http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/provost/strategic_plan/documents/StratPlan_2017.pdf

^AA (Academic Affairs), SA (Student Affairs), DAF (Division of Administration & Finance), URD (University Relations & Development), IT (Instructional Technology)

2. Provide at least two specific examples of institutional initiatives, programs or projects that have been particularly effective in promoting student success and learning. Include information about the evidence that the university has collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of these efforts and explain how the lessons that have been learned are being applied, as appropriate, to expand the effort to more students or to additional academic programs (CFRs 2.6, 2.10, 2.13, 4.1, 4.3)

Introduction:

Like many other institutions of higher education, CSULB for many years measured success and achievement of learning goals predominantly in quantitative terms. That is, ideas of student success hinged on retention and graduation rates. Even into the early 2010s, CSULB’s idea of student success remained fairly quantitative, when departments received grants for increasing their retention and graduation rates. Soon thereafter, however, two new grants to departments were sponsored for High Impact Practices (one for designing curriculum and another for assessment of HIPs) [CFR 3.3]. The new grants represented a paradigm shift in the way in which the institution viewed student success. The High Impact Practice Awards were a joint project of the Faculty Center for Professional Development and the office of Program Review and Assessment. The Faculty Center supported individuals with assigned time and / or small grants to develop curriculum focused on high impact practices and the Assessment Office supported departments with \$10,000 grants for promising or demonstrated high-impact practices associated with assessment. The purpose of the award programs was to recognize outstanding contributions to educational effectiveness using internationally recognized best practices [CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8].

It is one thing to monitor and promote student success when students are students, quite another to monitor the meaning of the degree and concomitant success after graduation. Since part of the university’s mission is that graduates are prepared to enter the California and global workforce, knowing student employment after graduation is essential to analyzing how well CSULB has

achieved its goals. To that end, CSULB has partnered with National Student Clearinghouse to track employment trends and gainful employment. By the time of CSULB’s site visit in 2020, there should be useful longitudinal data about students’ post-graduate success.

There are two specific initiatives the institution particularly sees as effective in promoting student success and learning: the Highly Valued Degree Initiative and the Core Competency Assessment Initiative.

A. Highly Valued Degree Initiative

In 2010, CSULB launched the Highly Valued Degree initiative (HVDI) designed to promote and measure student success and learning. One major initiative of HVDI has been to work towards quickly meeting the California State University's 2025 goals for graduation rates—an initiative known as Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI2025). Through the stakeholders' involvement in HVDI and its subcommittees, CSULB has embarked on a number of projects designed to improve student retention, learning, and graduation rates. HVDI currently has four task forces: Re-imagining the First Year, Communication, Research & Evaluation, and Student Engagement.

HVDI efforts have resulted in multiple projects including, but not limited to the following: working to decrease bottlenecks in courses; establishing a program by the Provost to add summer courses and provide financial support for students enrolled in those courses to decrease time to graduation; and the adoption of intrusive advising by the university and college advising centers. The taskforce on Research & Evaluation just completed a large-scale survey of faculty regarding student success and will begin a quantitative and qualitative analysis in Spring 2018 to track success based on the results from the survey [CFRs 4.3, 4.6].

The efforts of the campus community are beginning to show positive results. CSULB improved its graduation rates significantly in 2016-2017; the 4-year graduation rate increased by 50% from the previous year (going from 16% to 25%), surpassing the goal for 2019 (Chart 1). Additionally, the institution is beginning to close the achievement gap. This is especially important for a university designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Chart 2 reflects first-year persistence rates for under-represented minorities (URM). Though there is work to be done to narrow the opportunity gap in CSULB’s graduation rates, it is notable that the persistence gap between non under-represented minorities and under-represented minorities has been narrowing. As Chart 2 shows, the persistence gap hovered between 4% and 8% before dramatically decreasing to 1.97% amongst the Fall 2013 cohort [CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 2.10].

CHART 1: Graduation Initiative

Graduation Initiative	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2019-20 Goal	2024-25 Goal
4-Year Graduation Rate	15.1%	16.1%	16.6%	25.67%	24.0%	39.0%
6-Year Graduation Rate	64.9%	66.8%	68.3%	70.55%	72.0%	77.0%
Pell Recipient Graduation Rate	60.2%	64.2%	64.4%	68.4%	68.0%	77.0%
URM Graduation Rate	57.8%	63.5%	63.8%	64.2%	68.0%	77.0%
2-Year Transfer Graduation Rate	30.1%	36.6%	38.1%	38.39%	41.0%	49.0%
4-Year Transfer Graduation Rate	79.3%	80.6%	80.4%	85.0%	83.0%	91.0%

CHART 2: First-Year Persistence, Underrepresented Minority (URM)

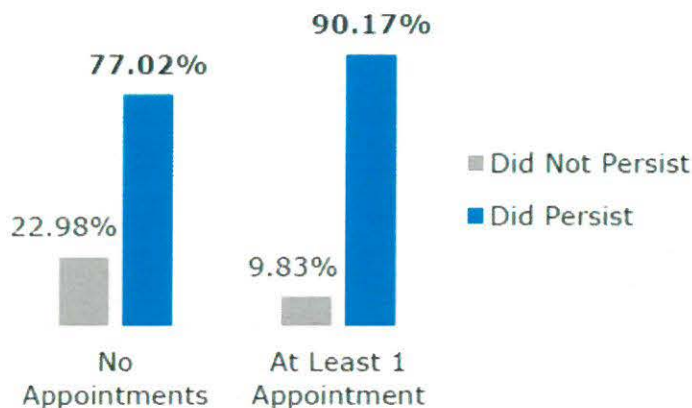
	Cohort Count	Cohort Count	1 Year Persist Count Within University	1 Year Persist Count Within University	1 Year Persist Rate Within University	1 Year Persist Rate Within University	Persistence Gap NURM/URM
Cohort Year	NURM	URM	NURM	URM	NURM	URM	
Fall 2005	2,413	1,542	2,088	1,233	86.53%	79.96%	6.57%
Fall 2006	2,449	1,607	2,136	1,319	87.22%	82.08%	5.14%
Fall 2007	2,235	1,605	1,977	1,316	88.46%	81.99%	6.47%
Fall 2008	2,419	1,839	2,170	1,502	89.71%	81.67%	8.04%
Fall 2009	1,737	1,571	1,566	1,352	90.16%	86.06%	4.1%
Fall 2010	1,901	1,848	1,725	1,588	90.74%	85.93%	4.81%
Fall 2011	1,842	1,927	1,660	1,636	90.12%	84.90%	5.22%
Fall 2012	1,827	2,139	1,665	1,853	91.13%	86.63%	4.5%
Fall 2013	1,985	1,930	1,805	1,717	90.93%	88.96%	1.97%

Finally, CSULB’s use of data analytics to institute intrusive advising is beginning to see meaningful gains in student success. In particular, first-year persistence rates of those students who had at least one documented advising session soared 13% over those students without advising. (Charts 3 and 3b). The University Center for Undergraduate Advising is also flagging seniors who are off-path to graduation, and while there appears to be some connection between advising and higher graduation rates for seniors, more data will need to be collected [CFRs 1.2, 2.7, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3].

CHART 3: Advising Appointments, Fall 2016 – Fall 2017

TERM	NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS
Fall 2016	29,231
Spring 2017	27,828
Summer 2017	9,750
Fall 2017	38,289

CHART 3B: Persistence and Advising



*source: EAB, Long Beach State: Success Outcomes Analysis (2017)

B. Core Competency Assessment Initiative

The 2013 Handbook of Accreditation states that institutions, especially larger institutions like CSULB, may choose to assess the core competencies at the program rather than the university level. Because of the multiple disciplines and programs at a large state college, CSULB adopted this framework for assessment, and the Director of Program Review and Assessment monitored the alignment of each program's learning outcomes (PLOs) with the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and the WSCUC core competencies. The 2015 interim report results made clear, however, that WSCUC would like to see more institution-wide discussion of the core competencies and their assessment.

As a result, CSULB instituted the Core Competency Assessment Initiative, a two-year assessment project (with possibility for extension) in which every undergraduate degree program engages in a direct assessment of a PLO aligned to a core competency [CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 4.3, 4.4]. The announcement of the initiative met with an immediate positive response and the submission of assessment plans from over 90% of undergraduate degree programs. Each of the directors of the remaining degree programs are working in consultation with the Director of Program Review and Assessment to revise PLOs and develop appropriate assessment plans. In January 2018, the university received the first round of direct assessments from departments, but will analyze the first-year responses as a whole in Summer of 2018.

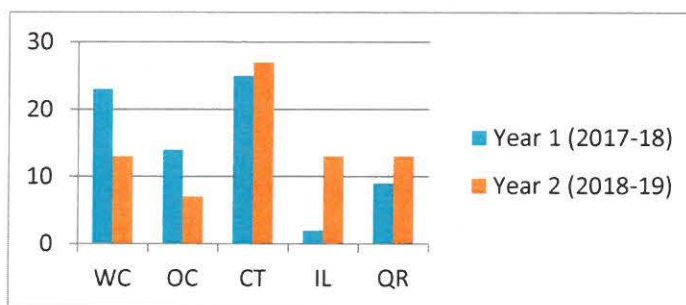
Unsurprisingly, as the data below indicates, Critical Thinking and Written Communication will be the most assessed core competencies over this two-year period. Critical Thinking most readily spans all disciplines, and the university has a well-established written communication framework in place.

Core Competency Initiative Two-Year Assessment Proposals

As part of the core competency assessment, the office of Program Review and Assessment will evaluate each program, but will also bring together representatives from across the university each

	Year 1 (2017-18)	Year 2 (2018-19)
WC*	23	13
OC	14	7
CT	25	27
IL	2	13
QR	9	13

*Written Communication (WC), Oral Communication (OC), Critical Thinking (CT), Information Literacy (IL), Quantitative Reasoning (QR)



summer to more globally assess a core competency. The first round of this global assessment will be written communication. CSULB's Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program has been working with faculty members to develop writing-intensive (WI) general education capstones in all of the colleges. There are some new challenges, however, as the CSU Chancellor has issued Executive

Orders (EOs) directly impacting the general education curriculum, including WI capstones. A planned assessment of WI classes last summer was postponed to Summer of 2018 as CSULB determined how writing-intensive classes will now be categorized. Despite challenges, this EO provides an important opportunity for self-reflection and a dramatic reimagining of the character and substance of general education in the twenty-first century.

As a preliminary step to direct assessment of written communication, the WAC office has instituted a year-long survey of students, alumni, and faculty about preparation for the workforce. This indirect evidence will provide necessary backdrop to the direct assessment of student achievement in the core competencies. A recent Gallup survey of College students determined that “Only a third of students believe they will graduate with the skills and knowledge to be successful in the job market (34%) and in the workplace (36%).” (Strada-Gallup 2017 Survey, <http://stradaeducation.gallup.com/reports/225161/2017-strada-gallup-college-student-survey.aspx>). Though there is still one semester of CSULB’s survey remaining and therefore the sample size is limited, preliminary results suggest that CSULB students perceive their preparation more positively in relation to those surveyed by Gallup:

Alumni – “I was prepared to write in the workplace.”

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
44.07%	35.17%	15.47%	5.30%

Current Students – “I am prepared to write in my profession once I graduate.”

Very Prepared	Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Unprepared
23.15%	40.89%	29.56%	6.4%

Current Students — “People who write well have better opportunities in the workplace.”

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
51.23%	32.51%	14.29%	1.97%

This compares favorably to data received from CSULB’s participation in 2017’s NSSE and the questions regarding how much their experience “contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing.” In that survey, the percentage of seniors responding “very much” or “quite a bit” stood at 70%. In terms of senior satisfaction with CSULB in relation to perceived gains, 87% responded favorably, comparing positively to the CSU rate of 83%.

There is already some direct longitudinal data regarding college-writing readiness that the institution will reference as it embarks on the writing-intensive assessments. The California State University’s Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) is designed to ensure that students graduate with appropriate written communication skills. Until 2016, CSULB used the Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE), a 75-minute essay examination, to determine whether students satisfied the GWAR requirement. In 2016, and in conjunction with multiple changes to the WAC curriculum, the WPE became the GPE, or GWAR Placement Examination. Students scoring below a 12 would be placed in an appropriate course to further develop written communication skills before enrolling in a writing-intensive capstone. Students scoring a 12 or higher on the test are cleared to enroll in a WI capstone. The results of tests from July 2014 through April 2017 show that “the pass rate for native

undergraduate students averages to 93.3%; the average pass rate for undergraduate transfer students is 88.3%" indicating that overwhelmingly, CSULB students are well prepared for advanced writing after their freshman year.

The final CSULB survey results will be triangulated with the NSSE results and with the direct assessments at the program and institutional level discussed above. The results from both sets of indirect data are encouraging, however, in that students place importance on their intellectual achievement of written communication. CSULB is excited to continue with the Core Competency Assessment Project and embed core competency assessment into program-level assessment for the future. It looks forward to further substantive tracking of student achievement of CSULB's Mission, Vision, and Outcomes.

On behalf of CSULB, I would like to thank the Commission for its continued support of our educational initiatives to define, monitor, and assess student success.

Sincerely,



Jane Close Conoley, Ph.D.
President

- c: Brian Jersky, Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Jody Cormack, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Programs & Dean of Graduate Studies
- Sharlene Sayegh, Director of Program Review & Assessment & Accreditation Liaison Officer