

### Section 3: Conclusion

WASC asserts that the primary goal of the Educational Effectiveness Review is to “invite sustained engagement by the institution on the extent to which it fulfills its educational objectives.” This work as it applies to our three themes has been the focus of this report. We close this report by summarizing our accomplishments and our challenges as identified herein.

The WASC review has given us the opportunity to deeply study the commitment to our shared core values of social justice and civic engagement. Both of these institutional priorities are profoundly embedded in our curricula, research, co-curricular programs, and service to the community. The data that we have gathered for the review pointed us to particular strengths in the curriculum, but also to a discrepancy between social justice and civic engagement, especially for first year students. We are secure in knowing that social justice is a value that is embedded in every aspect of the university’s activities. We also now understand that we must undertake a number of measures in order to ensure that civic engagement has the same presence in the university community, and those activities are now underway. In addition, in the coming years we must measure and evaluate the General Education learning outcomes related to these institutional values.

The changing student population has created the need for more student service support programs, and the WASC review has given us an opportunity to develop and study these needed programs. This effort has overlapped into the Student Success and Graduation Initiative as we have come to understand through analysis and reflection the necessity for Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to work hand in hand in our effort to improve student learning and graduation rates. This effort has to occur both inside and outside of the classroom.

Our study of the changing faculty has prompted the recognition that new faculty need clear guidelines and greater support for developing their scholarship. The School of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement is in the process of creating a template that might be used by other departments in clarifying their RTP guidelines. The subcommittee work of the WASC review in this area has given voice through focus groups to many of the concerns of both junior and senior faculty. It has also provided the impetus for ORSP to work more closely with faculty on their development of research capabilities.

Deep analytic work is occurring in the area of student success. This work has occurred largely independently of the WASC review, but the review has given us the opportunity to aggregate many efforts and evaluate their effectiveness. The extensive Milestone Study allowed us to set benchmarks for freshman and sophomore students and provided a comparison for all at-risk populations and support efforts. This effort has allowed us to finally identify the students we need to provide with additional support. However, there is no silver bullet for quickly improving graduation rates or ensuring student learning. Although we have not yet reached our goal of a 50.6% graduation rate, that increase now seems attainable, and we are encouraged and excited about closing the gap between URM and non-URM students. A groundswell of faculty is beginning to take interest in this issue with regard to their own students, and they are independently researching and making changes. These efforts will continue long after the review has been completed.

After years of debate, the General Education program is in the process of implementation. Though it had been scheduled to begin in Fall 2013, to ensure a high quality program that is shared by all faculty, and to continue to develop the culture of assessment that has begun to grow at SF State, we

now know that we will need another year to complete the implementation. Although planning the assessment of this program has been a challenge, faculty are deeply involved in researching best practices, and their work will translate into a comprehensive and effective assessment of General Education.

The current WASC reaccreditation review has occurred over an eventful period of time for San Francisco State University. Since the review began, we have transitioned to a new Provost and a new President. We have reduced from eight to six colleges, hired two new deans, and added almost 100 new faculty. Student enrollment, particularly out-of-area students, has increased; we have a new CSU Chancellor, and the CSU budget has been cut by 39%. There is no doubt that in the next few years, the University will face the need to change in fundamental ways if we are to maintain the level of education that we have traditionally provided to students. We believe that we must be forward thinking if we are to continue our commitment to higher education rather than simply lamenting the budget crisis.

We face these challenges buoyed by the knowledge that our core campus values remain strong and that they have served us well in navigating the challenges presented by recent reductions in state funding. With the expiration of our strategic plan in 2010 and with a new administration in place, we must renew and revise our institutional plan. We look forward to that planning process and to the outcomes that will direct the path of the institution in the years ahead. Our previous institutional planning efforts were essential to predicting the needs of our students and initiating institutional activities that have allowed us to overcome significant challenges. Initiating a new planning process that will help us move ahead fiscally and academically is critical to our continued success.

In one of his first addresses to the campus, President Leslie Wong stated, “The challenges ahead of us are daunting only if we want them to be. San Francisco State University has never been shy in the face of ideas or quiet with our passions. For me that represents the vitality of a great university.”

On balance, we believe the future of San Francisco State University is bright. The deep analysis and self-reflection necessitated by the reaccreditation effort have prepared us for the planning efforts that lie ahead. We hope that our research and reflection come through clearly in this report. We are well aware of the challenges and opportunities before us, and we now need to reflect on how to address them. Our leadership is committed to delivering on the promise of our mission, and we look forward to a productive relationship with WASC as we strive to fulfill this promise.