Student Learning in a Changing University
San Francisco State University

WASC Capacity and Preparatory Review Report
Fall 2010
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WASC Acronyms Key

AAC&U – (American Association of Colleges and Universities).
AIR – (Academic Institutional Research).
APD/APEE – Office of Planning and Development (APD), previously called Office of Academic Planning and Educational Effectiveness (APEE).
AT – (Office of Academic Technology).
BLG – (Baccalaureate Learning Goals).
CFR - (Criteria for Review) Specific WASC requirements.
CARP – (Campus Academic Resources Program).
CESD – (Cultural, Ethnic, or Social Diversity) A course category in General Education at SF State.
CPR – (Capacity/Preparatory Review) The second stage of the WASC review, which focuses on infrastructure issues.
CLA – (Collegiate Learning Assessment) A value-added test of critical thinking and writing administered to freshmen and seniors.
CSU – (California State University).
CWEP – (Committee on Written English Proficiency)
DPRC – (Disabilities Programs and Resource Center)
EER – (Educational Effectiveness Review) The third stage of the WASC review, which focuses on student learning and educational effectiveness.
EOP – (Educational Opportunity Program).
FGTF – (Facilitating Graduation Task Force) A SF State task force that is studying graduation and retention and implementing activities designed to increase graduation rates and time to degree.
FSSE – (Faculty Survey of Student Engagement) Survey of faculty that measures their opinions regarding student engagement with their academic experience.
GRTF – (Graduation Requirements Task Force) A SF State task force that developed a revised General Education program, baccalaureate vision statement, and baccalaureate learning outcomes.
GWAR – (Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement) The final writing requirement for all SF State graduates.
Hybrid – Courses that combine face-to-face contact with the instructor and online instruction.
Hyflex – Courses in which student have the choice of attending class or watching the class through lecture capture.
ICCE – (Institute for Community and Civic Engagement).
LAC – (Learning Assistance Center).
LEAP – (Liberal Education & America’s Promise) An AAC&U Council on liberal education.
NSSE – (National Survey of Student Engagement) Professionally developed survey of freshmen and seniors that measures the behaviors of students that are related to their engagement with their academic experience.
ORSP – (Office of Research and Sponsored Projects).
PULSE – SF State survey of students administered every semester during online registration.
RTP – (Retention, Tenure, and Promotion).
SIMS – (Student Information Management System) The SF State database system that manages student data.
TTD – (Time to degree).
UC – (University of California).
UPAC – (University Planning and Advisory Council) Strategic Planning Group initiated by President Corrigan in Fall 2009.
WASC – (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) The regional accrediting association for the Western United States.
WAC/WID – (Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Discipline) A writing approach that infuses writing into the genre of specific discipline such as scientific writing.
Section I: Introduction

The Capacity and Preparatory Review is designed to enable the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Commission to determine whether an institution fulfills the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity: “The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures and processes to fulfill its purposes.” In keeping with the Commission’s goal of a focused accreditation process that permits adaptation and responsiveness to institutional contexts and priorities, San Francisco State University elected to conduct its Capacity and Preparatory Review and its Educational Effectiveness Review with a focus on three themes:

- Social Justice and Civic Engagement
- The Changing University
- Student Success

The activities surrounding this cycle of reaccreditation for San Francisco State University began in Spring 2007 with the appointment of the WASC Steering Committee by President Robert A. Corrigan. Under the leadership of the Provost, the Steering Committee developed the SF State Institutional Proposal after an extensive self-review following the WASC guidelines in the 2001 Handbook of Accreditation. The first theme (Social Justice and Civic Engagement) represents two of the university’s strategic priorities, which are embedded in the SF State psyche and programs in myriad ways. [CFR 1.1] Preserving and maintaining those priorities is essential to the future of the university, and for this reason, it was chosen as a theme.

The two remaining themes (The Changing University and Student Success) represent issues that are crucially important to the current context of the university. Deep engagement with these issues across the campus, both in terms of capacity and educational effectiveness, will facilitate the university’s ability to respond to current trends and needs.

Preparation of the Capacity and Preparatory Review

The Capacity and Preparatory Review activities began in January 2009, immediately following the approval of the SF State WASC Institutional Proposal. [CFR 1.9] Theme subcommittees were established for Social Justice, Civic Engagement, Changing Student Demographics, Changing Faculty, and Graduation and Retention. During the 2009-10 academic year, the Social Justice and Civic Engagement subcommittees were merged when one of the subcommittee chairs took a leave of absence. The subthemes of Assessment, General Education, and Writing are ongoing projects with long-established committee structures, so the WASC review work was folded into the work of these committees.

The subcommittees spent Spring 2009 studying the WASC process, considering the relevant issues surrounding their topics, and refining the research questions that the subcommittees would study. The subcommittee chairs worked through Summer 2009 to evaluate the research questions.

The Office of Academic Institutional Research (AIR) identified the questions for which the University already had data. [CFR 4.5] The chairs determined which of the remaining questions were suitable for survey questionnaires and which were more appropriate for focus group discussion. Following this determination, the subcommittee chairs and AIR developed several sets of questionnaires for faculty, staff, administration, and students to investigate the campus community views regarding the specific research questions. The surveys were administered during Fall 2009. The subcommittee chairs and AIR

analyzed the data, and the results were presented to the subcommittees at the end of Fall 2009 and the beginning of Spring 2010.

Based on committee discussions, the focus group questions were modified and refined. During Spring 2010, the chairs of the WASC Capacity and EER Reviews and the staff of Academic Planning and Development organized and conducted 20 focus groups involving staff, faculty, administration, and students. The CPR and the EER chairs, who conducted the focus groups, recruited their own students to assist in the focus group process. These students attended independent study courses (taught by the chairs) that covered the principles and methods in focus group research. Following the classroom component, the students recorded the focus groups, analyzed the data, and wrote summaries for each focus group discussion. The transcripts and summaries were then passed to the appropriate subcommittees, who then deliberated on all data collected. At the end of Spring 2010, each subcommittee submitted a final report to the WASC Capacity and Preparatory Chair for evaluation and synthesis. The following three essays summarize the findings and conclusions contained in these final reports and suggest recommendations for the Educational Effectiveness Review.

It should be noted that the subcommittees followed the logical paths of their research rather than strictly adhering to institutional capacity issues. As a result, some of the recommendations for the EER are related to capacity and some are related to student learning and educational effectiveness. This approach seems appropriate for the SF State review.

Financial Context of the SF State Capacity Review

The SF State Capacity/Preparatory Review has occurred within the context of an unprecedented financial crisis that has had an impact on this campus and all of California higher education. Funding to the CSU and UC systems has diminished incrementally over the past 15 years, with a precipitous drop in 2009-2010 in the face of competing social service needs and a reluctance on the part of the legislature to raise taxes. Over the past two years alone the CSU has seen state support cut by $625 million or 21%. SF State alone lost $47.5 million, and the legislature now provides less than 50% of SF State’s funding.

In the midst of California’s continuing budget crisis, San Francisco State is relying upon a network of campus members including faculty, staff, administrators and students to do what we have done as a university community for many years – assemble facts and examine options to determine how best to uphold the university’s mission in the face of shrinking revenues. [CFR 1.3]

It is clear that we will not be able to continue to operate the University as we have in the past. During the 2009-10 AY, 350 fewer course sections (10%) were offered and the faculty and staff furlough of two days per month undoubtedly had an impact on quality. In the 2010-11 academic year, the furlough ended, and the University was able to augment class offerings by using federal stimulus dollars to bring class availability back to the level required to minimally serve our students. Unfortunately, that funding is limited to this academic year, so the University is using the 2010-11 year as a period of transition, and several steps are underway to guide the transition.

The University Planning and Advisory Council (UPAC) was formed in November 2009 to solicit campus feedback and assist in re-envisioning SF State by considering ways in which the University might be restructured and streamlined to make better use of the funds available to us. The work of this council is not yet finished or approved, but it is expected that the council will recommend, along with a number of other cost-cutting measures, transitioning to a six-college structure rather than an eight-college configuration. In addition to the work of UPAC, the Provost’s Task Force on Capacity is looking at ways to determine the optimum size and balance within academic programs in a more intentional way than we have done in the past. [CFR 3.5, 4.1, 4.2] Also the recent 5% student fee increase for Spring 2011 and the 10% proposed increase for Fall 2011, will provide greatly needed resources to the University. In short, we are working diligently to maintain a high quality of education at SF State without seriously altering the university’s mission of social justice and civic engagement or its commitment to access. [CFR 1.5]
As the budget crisis has unfolded, President Corrigan and his Cabinet have remained in touch with the campus community through frequent emails and town hall meetings specifically focused on the budget. At the beginning of the 2009-10 academic year, a special forum was organized in which every Vice President, Associate Vice President, and Academic Dean provided a report on the impact the budget cuts had on their academic units. In addition, the University created a “Budget Central” website, which provides summary explanations of the budget crisis as well as frequent updates regarding legislative actions. [CFR 1.3, 3.10] Also, several town hall meetings to address UPAC and the budget were conducted during Fall 2010. We do not know the answers to all of the questions related to the budget at this time, but we do know that our common values of access, quality education, social justice, and civic engagement – and our commitment to the institution and one another – will sustain us.

Section II: Reflective Essays

Essay 1: Demonstrating Commitment to Social Justice and Civic Engagement

Historical Context

In October, 2009, the university community celebrated the 40th anniversary of the events in 1968-69 when students of the Black Student Union and Third World Liberation Front, staff and faculty, as well as members from the larger Bay Area community, organized and led a series of actions to protest systematic discrimination, lack of access, neglect, and misrepresentation of histories, cultures, and knowledge of indigenous peoples and communities of color within the university's curriculum and programs. Their actions led to the establishment of four departments – Asian American Studies, Black Studies, La Raza Studies, and Native American Studies – and the creation of the College of Ethnic Studies, still the only college of its kind in the nation. These events remain a signature of the University.

Mission and Strategic Plan

SF State continues to pride itself on its identity as an institution that values social justice, equity, and civic engagement. [CFR 1.5] This identity permeates the University in mission statements and strategic planning, addresses by administrators, and curricular design. In his preamble to the SFSU Bulletin, President Robert A. Corrigan highlights engagement as one of our “… proudest characteristics. San Francisco State has been a strong community partner for more than 100 years [and] has achieved national recognition for its success in building community service into its academic program.” The Commission on University Strategic Planning (CUSP II) also emphasizes this commitment in Goal I of its strategic plan [CFR 4.1, 4.2]:

San Francisco State University demonstrates commitment to its core values of equity and social justice through the diversity of its students and employees, the content and delivery of its academic programs and support systems, and the opportunities for both campus and external constituencies to engage in meaningful discourse and activity. – CUSP II Strategic Plan 2005

Institutes and Centers

The focus of research efforts at many of our institutes is indicative of this identity. The Cesar E. Chavez Institute studies and documents the impact of social oppression on the health, education, and the well-being of disenfranchised communities in the United States. The Institute for Sexuality, Social Inequality and Health initiates basic research, educational, and social policy initiatives regarding the effects of social inequality on sexuality and health. The Institute for Civic and Community Engagement provides
opportunities for civic engagement and leadership development for students, faculty, and community members. The Institute on Disability advances research on the nature of disability while also introducing the topic into the curricula campus-wide. The Center for Integration & Improvement of Journalism develops a means of increasing the recruitment, retention, graduation, and placement of ethnic minority journalists with the intent to bring diversity to the country's newsrooms while promoting an improved and balanced coverage of our multicultural society. The Health Equity Institute integrates research, curricula, community service, and training programs that address health disparities in the United States. [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

Curriculum

In the fall of 2005, the Academic Senate created the Graduation Requirements Task Force (GRTF) and called for an assessment of “the appropriateness and value of the university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements currently required of all SF State undergraduate students.” [CFR 2.7, 4.6, 4.7] In Spring 2010, the Academic Senate passed the final report. Social justice and diversity issues are infused throughout the new curricular design. Of the six overarching Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLG) of the program, two speak directly to diversity and engagement goals. To achieve appreciation of diversity, graduates will “know, understand, and appreciate multiple forms and variations of human diversity, both within the United States and globally. Graduates will respect themselves and others. They will have obtained a historical perspective about the development of our diverse nation and will be able to engage in informed, civil discourse with persons different from themselves in intellectual and cultural outlook.”

To develop the quality of ethical engagement, graduates will “recognize their responsibility to work toward social justice and equity by contributing purposefully to the well-being of their local communities, their nations, and the people of the world, as well as to the sustainability of the natural environment.” These goals are further infused throughout the new lower division curriculum package with specific student learning outcomes on diversity, social justice, and civic engagement specified for each area of the curriculum. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

In the upper division, the proposed General Education options include a choice of nine “topical perspectives.” Students will choose one topic and will take three courses from that topical area. Of these topics, two, Life in the San Francisco Bay Area and Social Justice and Civic Knowledge/Engagement, specifically involve opportunities for engaged learning. In the former, courses might address subjects such as “urban and other communities, neighborhoods, social-cultural characteristics, government and politics, progressive or populist movements, and social activism.” In the latter, students will “explore their responsibility to work toward social justice and equity by contributing purposefully to the well-being of their local communities, their nations, and the people of the world.” Other topical areas intersect with the civic mission as well. For example, in Personal and Community Well-Being, courses might address environmental sustainability and community revitalization, and in Human Diversity, courses will encourage a respectful “appreciation of differences among individuals and groups.” For further information regarding the new General Education package, see Essay III of this report.

In addition to the new design for General Education, the undergraduate curriculum will continue to include an American Ethnic and Racial Minorities requirement which recognizes “race” as an historically and socially constructed category that has created racial minority populations that have been “excluded from sustained influence on, access to, and participation in structures and institutions and the privilege and power deriving from such exclusion.”

In summary, San Francisco State remains a campus conscious of its activist past and continues its dedication to progressive approaches to addressing the disparities and inequities between social groups. It

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2 The GE requirements will include three options – topical perspective or integrated study or study abroad.

3 In addition to the Graduation Requirements, the Academic Senate has added a new “sustainability” requirement.
is this context in which we have chosen social justice, equity and civic engagement as a WASC theme and have raised the capacity issue stated in our Institutional Proposal:

**Capacity Issue:** To what extent does the institution’s infrastructure support issues of social justice, equity, and civic engagement? (CFR: 3.1, 4.4, 4.5)

In the face of the current budget crisis in California, this issue has become critical for the campus. As one student remarked in our recently conducted WASC survey, “I was involved in my own community and had to stop. Working full-time and going to school full-time is all I can do.” Faculty members echoed this sentiment as well. One wrote:

I came to SFSU because of its commitment to social justice and because of the university's commitment to ethnic students … I am afraid that the budget crisis will be used as an excuse to move away from those commitments. I hope that is not the case.

**Methods**

In examining institutional capacity, the subcommittee on Social Justice and Civic Engagement drew data from multiple sources, including institutional surveys and focus groups of students, staff and faculty. The sources used for this analysis are:

- NSSE 2007 and 2008 survey
- Degrees of Preparation survey
- Assessment of the Social Justice Strategic Planning Goal
- PULSE survey
- Faculty Perceptions of Institutional Barriers to and Facilitators of Community Engaged Scholarship at SFSU
- Student, Faculty, and Staff WASC surveys
- Student and Faculty focus groups

**Commitment to Social Justice, Equity, and Civic Engagement**

SF State is renowned for its commitment to social justice and civic engagement. In 2006, SF State was one of only 62 U.S. colleges and universities selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for the new Community Engagement Classification in both the Curricular Engagement and Outreach & Partnerships category. The designation recognized the university's substantial commitments to “teaching, learning and scholarship which engage faculty, students and community in mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration.”

For three subsequent years, 2006 through 2008, the university was a recipient of the President of the United States Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll Award with Distinction presented by the Corporation for National and Community Service, in recognition of the university's community service efforts.

Beyond institutional recognition, SF State’s reputation is well established among faculty who seek employment here. In the WASC Faculty Survey conducted in 2009, faculty were asked, “How important was SF State’s commitment to social justice in your decision to seek a position here?” More than 55% of the respondents indicated that the commitment was either “very important” or “important” in their decision. In the WASC Student Survey, students were asked whether or not they agreed with the

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4 Internal report written by Juliana van Olphen, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Education, Connie Ulasewicz, Assistant Professor, Department of Consumer and Family Studies/Dietetics, and Dave Walsh, Associate Professor, Department of Kinesiology, 2008.
statement, “SF State demonstrates its commitment to social justice and equity through its policies, practices and procedures.” Again, nearly 57% strongly agreed or agreed.

**Engagement Activities**

Within this commitment, the University provides an array of curricular and co-curricular activities to support engagement leading to the development of civic and social justice values. [CFR 2.5, 2.11] Several of the university’s survey instruments were examined to determine who participated in these activities and what types of experiences they encountered. In the NSSE 2007 survey, freshmen and seniors were asked whether or not they “had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity” than their own. Sixty percent of freshmen and 66% of senior respondents indicated that they had.

In Figure 1 below, responses to a similar question on the extent to which the institution emphasizes and encourages “contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds” are compared between SF State respondents and those at other (a) urban universities, (b) comparable universities, and (c) all NSSE participating universities. The analysis indicates that SF State has significantly greater emphasis and encouragement than institutions in each of the other categories. [CFR 2.6, 2.7]

![Figure 1](image-url)

**Figure 1**

**Institutional Emphasis on Diverse Perspectives**

Q10C: To what extent does your institution emphasize the following: Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds? (Results = Very Often + Often). Seventy-one percent of freshman respondents and 54% of senior respondents believe that the University encourages contact among students from different backgrounds.

The Institute for Community and Civic Engagement (ICCE) coordinates campus service learning, collects data on faculty and student involvement, promotes faculty and student participation in civic engagement, and conducts research regarding the educational impact of these activities. Last year, an internal survey conducted by ICCE indicated that during Academic Year 2008-2009, SF State students enrolled in 527 course sections in which community service learning was an integrated course element. These sections enrolled a total of 11,261 students or 38% of the total student population. Those who opted to participate in a community service learning course provided more than 506,000 hours of service. Included in this number are the nearly 100,000 hours that social work students provide to hospitals, clinics, homeless shelters, and other programs. Many students earn educational awards for their stellar service. During AY
2008-09, SF State placed #1 out of 89 higher education institutions in California by awarding $147,000 in *Students in Service* educational scholarships for performing 51,000 hours of service in their communities. [CFR 2.6, 2.7]

In addition to community service and interaction with others in the classroom and beyond, SF State has made great efforts to encourage students to vote in public elections. During 2008, for example, the voter registration efforts assisted more than 5,000 SF State students to register and vote. The success of these efforts has led to the campus becoming its own voter precinct. SF State also ranks 16th in the nation among all U.S. colleges and universities for the number of Peace Corps volunteers it has inspired.

**Outcomes**

The combination of the institutional mission of social justice, faculty dedication, and community engagement can be seen in many ways. In 2009, San Francisco State ranked 12th nationally after awarding 2,700 baccalaureate degrees to minorities during the 2007-08 academic year, an 11% increase from the previous year. In the sciences, SF State has a particularly noteworthy record for successfully graduating underrepresented students. In July 2009, Biology Professor Frank Bayliss received a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring from President Barack Obama for his work with the Student Enrichment Opportunities (SEO) office that Dr. Bayliss founded nearly 20 years ago. The office provides financial support and mentoring to students in the sciences from the undergraduate to doctoral level and now helps send 20 to 25 underrepresented minority students from SF State to doctoral programs each year. Several of our surveys provide meaningful analysis of the effectiveness of the undergraduate program on raising students’ abilities and involvement. In the PULSE 2010 survey, 72% of the students rated their SF State coursework as Good or Excellent.

![Figure 2](image)

**Effectiveness of Civic Skills from Freshman to Senior Year**

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5 Some of the increase is attributable to the interest in the 2008 election by young voters.
Though proud of our accomplishments there is room for improvement. Our analysis has led to eight recommendations that will help build capacity to support the campus mission. These recommendations fall into three categories: Recommendations for the institution as a whole, recommendations involving students and curricula, and recommendations involving faculty.

**Recommendations for the institution as a whole**

**Recommendation 1:** Campus decisions regarding budget cuts must go beyond financial considerations and examine the impact on the university mission. [CFR 3.5]

The budget crisis within California has had a major deleterious impact on the campus budget. Student fee increases will impact the poorest students the most. Layoffs of lecturers and gaps in staff hiring may have a negative effect on programs that support equity and access. As discussions on the budget cuts move forward, the University should include the impact of budget cuts on social justice and diversity goals in its considerations.

**Recommendation 2:** The University should adopt and communicate a common definition of social justice for the campus community. [CFR 1.1, 1.2]

Throughout the deliberation and survey processes, we have discovered that there are no single definitions of social justice or civic engagement that are used commonly throughout the campus. The Graduation Requirements Task Force report passed by the Senate offers a good starting point with the description of the curriculum in the social justice/civic engagement category. However, in order to focus scarce resources and to determine whether or not the objectives of these goals have been achieved, refinement of these definitions will be useful. Multiple definitions may be adopted as appropriate, and the campus will benefit from prominently displaying the definitions on website banners. The following recommendation is in a similar vein.

**Recommendations involving students and curricula**

**Recommendation 3:** Where appropriate, course syllabi should indicate how learning objectives align with the university mission. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

While course syllabi are currently required to show the alignment between the course outcomes and the program outcomes, they are not required to show the alignment between courses and the Baccalaureate Learning Goals or the university mission. The requirement for including the alignment of mission and Baccalaureate Learning Goals in course approval packages and on course syllabi will ensure learning in mission-related areas. This change will create alignment between strategic goals and student learning at the course level and will become an important issue in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

**Recommendation 4:** The University should consider and determine whether to award academic credit to students for community-based learning. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]

Many of the community service learning, problem based learning, culminating experience, and other courses require students to perform 60 to 100 hours of work in the field to complement traditional classroom-based learning. Often students perform these activities and the corresponding reflection without earning additional course credit and without being paid. Departments should be charged with examining the credit allocation in these courses to determine whether the awarding of credit is equitable. In order to accomplish this change, the Academic Senate should determine the appropriate committee for implementing this change and the administrative process for maintaining the academic records.

In the student survey, students were asked whether or not they knew where to find more information about opportunities to participate in community service both related and unrelated to courses. Surprisingly we found that many students did not know how to do this. Thus, we are led to the recommendation below.
**Recommendation 5:** A task force should be created to recommend ways to increase awareness of civic engagement opportunities for students. [CFR 1.2, 2.2]

The 2010 student PULSE survey raised the issue of how often students experienced or observed insensitive behavior or discrimination. The table below summarizes the responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>77.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3372</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented, more than 20% of students have experienced or observed these incidents. These data motivated the suggestion to establish an office where students, faculty, and staff can go to discuss these problems when they arise.

**Recommendation 6:** The University would benefit from an ombudsperson or office specifically designed to handle discrimination-related issues. [CFR 1.5, 2.13]

**Recommendations involving faculty**

The following two recommendations concern steps the University should take to strengthen and recognize the work of faculty related to its mission.

**Recommendation 7:** The University should develop definitions and standards for recognizing accomplishments in the area of community engaged scholarship. [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

**Recommendation 8:** Departments should develop criteria in their RTP policies that allow for the recognition of work related to social justice and civic engagement within the three RTP categories (i.e. teaching, professional achievement and growth, and service). [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

Faculty opinions in this area were expressed often and emphatically in the focus groups.

### Essay 2: Facing the Challenges of a Changing Faculty and Student Profile

Historically, San Francisco State University has drawn its students from the local area and has largely served non-traditional students who were older, employed, and had family responsibilities. Recent data, however, indicate that this demographic profile is changing. Data collected through the NSSE and FSSE surveys over the past four years indicate dramatic changes in both the student body and the faculty. Because of these changes, the WASC Steering Committee determined that further in-depth study of the impact of these changes was needed. Essay 2 analyzes the changes in the student and faculty demographics and recent responses to those changes.

**Capacity Issue:** What is the story emerging from the data on student enrollment? [CFR: 4.2, 4.4, 4.5]
When student enrollment data for the past 10 years are displayed graphically, they paint a striking portrait of the changing demographics at San Francisco State.

**Enrollment**

The student population at San Francisco State has experienced a period of rapid growth and significant changes over the past 10 years. In Fall 2000, a total of 26,826 students were enrolled compared to 30,469 enrolled in Fall 2009. Hidden inside the substantial growth of 13.6% overall are even more dramatic changes in the composition of the student population:

- The incoming freshman population doubled from 2,042 to 4,032.
- The percentage of freshmen coming from outside the San Francisco Bay Area has more than tripled, increasing from 574 to 1,815.
- The student average age has changed from 26.2 to 24.5, while the average undergraduate age has dropped from 24.0 to 22.8.
- The graduate population has declined from being 24.1% of the student body to 17.9%.

**Ethnicity**

San Francisco State places a high value on its commitment to social justice and equity, as demonstrated in Essay 1. One measure for the embodiment of this value is the ethnic diversity of the enrolled student population and the students who graduate. As the student population has become younger and more likely to come from outside the Bay Area, the ethnic makeup of the students has been watched closely to determine if the campus retains its ethnic diversity. [CFR 1.5, 4.5] Comparing the ethnic data from Fall 2000 to Fall 2009, several trends are apparent:

- The undergraduate Chicano/Latino population has grown steadily from 15% to 20.3%.
- Asian/Pacific Islander undergraduates have declined from 39.5% to 32.8%.
- African American undergraduates have declined from 7.3% to 6.3%, although the number of African Americans enrolled has increased by 12.9%.
- The graduate populations have seen similar changes, except that Asian/Pacific Islander graduates have grown from 20.7% to 22.4%.

The best evidence of the continuing campus commitment to supporting a diverse student body is found in a comparison of the ethnic breakdown of undergraduates enrolled to the undergraduate degrees awarded. The ethnic breakdowns of the two groups are remarkably aligned, giving testament to San Francisco State’s ability to support the success of all students.

**Enrollments by College/Program**

Enrollments by college and major typically rise and fall over time. Review of undergraduate and graduate enrollments since Fall 2000 show the following trends:

- Growth by major for freshmen has been most notable in two colleges: Business and Health and Human Services.
- For new transfers, the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences showed the most dramatic increases in the first five years of the decade, but this has leveled off. The number of new transfers into the College of Health and Human Services has doubled in the past 10 years.
- Graduate enrollments have also fluctuated year to year, but the most significant changes have occurred in the College of Education, which has grown from 934 to 1,411 students (+51%), and the College of Business, which has declined from 759 to 416 (-45%) students.
The reasons behind these enrollment trends have provided ripe opportunities for thought and analysis. Looking forward, further consideration of the changes in the student population leads logically to the question:

**Capacity Issue:** How should the University respond to increasing student enrollment with uneven distribution across majors and class levels? [CFR: 2.10, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10]

As the undergraduate student population has grown, several academic departments have come under increasing pressure from students seeking access to classes, particularly in high-demand majors. As a result, faculty in more departments have sought designation as “impacted” majors, which is defined by the CSU as having more students who want to enroll in a particular major than can be accommodated by the faculty and class resources available to the department. As a part of the WASC CPR, an Impaction Committee was convened to study the need for impaction and the possible unintended consequences of allowing departments to impact. Impacted majors are allowed to impose higher supplemental criteria on students hoping to be admitted to the major, and as of Fall 2011 a total of 11 departments will have impaction status.

Four of these departments have long-term experience with impaction: Nursing, Social Work, Interior Design, and Apparel Design and Merchandising. These departments have found that they are much better able to regulate the flow of students through the majors and make courses available to the students when they need them. The majors have developed robust systems for faculty to review applicants based on supplemental materials and select the students with the best likelihood to succeed in the major.

Three additional majors were approved for impaction for the Fall 2010 admissions cycle: Psychology, Dietetics, and Journalism. As one of the largest undergraduate majors on campus, Psychology in particular presents challenges to the University and the department to limit the number of students enrolling. The department fell from 495 new students enrolled in Fall 2009 to only 160 new students in Fall 2010. Because students who are not selected for admission can choose to come to San Francisco State in an alternate major, some students not admitted to Psychology are expected to come in the second choice major, creating a ripple effect in the number of students in related majors, for example, Sociology. We have already seen this happening in the Fall 2010 enrollments. The other two newly impacted majors, Dietetics and Journalism, are smaller, but might have similar ripple effects as impaction becomes a reality for their applicants.

In Spring 2010, four more programs applied and were approved for impaction in Fall 2011: Child and Adolescent Development (CAD), Design and Industry, Environmental Studies, and Pre-Nursing. The CAD major serves a large number of students who want to work with children in various capacities. Pre-Nursing is a pre-major that allows students to work toward prerequisites required for admission to the Nursing major. Impaction for both CAD and Pre-Nursing is expected to have a similar noticeable impact on other campus departments as fewer students receive access to their first choice majors.

If more departments move to request impaction in response to enrollment pressures, the effect on the University as a whole will become increasingly apparent. To analyze the outcomes and identify possible unintended consequences of this situation, the Enrollment Management Committee has begun a serious review of the effect of increasing the number of impacted majors on the campus and its students. There is concern that increasing numbers of impacted majors might affect the rich diversity of the student body, possibly eroding the University’s mission of social justice and equity. Moreover, the question of the capacity of each major given the severe budget restrictions and shifting student demographics is an issue that must be addressed in the very near future. In response, the Provost has appointed a Capacity Task Force to identify the variables that determine capacity. Both of these issues will be addressed in the 2010-11 academic year. [CFR 1.5, 2.10, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10]
**Recommendation 9**: Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management, located in Student Affairs, should work together to develop methodologies for departments to analyze their optimal size given their current resources, and they should align their academic planning and budgeting within these analyses. [CFR 3.5]

All of these demographic and enrollment changes draw attention to whether the University has changed its focus and curricular offerings in response to the changes in the students. The next research question addressed in this theme follows this train of thought:

**Capacity Issue**: How has the campus focus changed in response to the student demographic changes?

With an increasingly younger and more residential population, the need for campus support services and co-curricular activities has grown significantly. Examination of enrollment data and recent NSSE results reveals that San Francisco State University, while maintaining some characteristics of its past as a “commuter” campus, has also become a student population that works less, commutes less, and is on campus for longer periods of the day and week. Campus support units must be aware of the demographic changes and respond as needed to serve the expanding student population.

**Student Affairs/Student Life**

To address the co-curricular needs of the changing student population, the Division of Student Affairs has been recently restructured to provide a greater focus on the needs of this new student population within Student Affairs. Under the guidance of an experienced Student Affairs professional, the Student Life area is expected to become a coordinated unit with the mission of attending to the developmental needs of the younger student population, while not neglecting the needs of SF State’s traditional older student populations. [CFR1.3, 2.10, 2.11, 3.8]

The Student Life area focuses on several goals:

- To improve retention and assist with facilitating graduation
- To provide and develop robust programs, support services, and events for students
- To establish policies and procedures to address safety and security concerns
- To be proactive in assessing student needs and providing appropriate services
- To connect faculty, staff and administrators with students through co-curricular programming

As part of this shift, the Division of Student Affairs has undertaken an intensive, year-long effort to bring assessment and student learning outcomes into the vocabulary of student affairs professionals and staff. [CFR 2.10, 2.11]

**Housing**: A coordinated response involving campus housing is critical to the efforts to accommodate this shift in the student population. San Francisco State has built and acquired several additional residential properties in the last decade as described in the Campus Master Plan:

- The Village at Centennial Square was built in 2001 housing 720 students.
- University Park South apartments were acquired in 2001 on the southern perimeter of the campus footprint, adding 156 bed-spaces.
- University Park North apartments were acquired in 2005 on the northern perimeter of the campus, adding 697 apartment units.

Although the properties are still transitioning to being fully occupied by students and other University-affiliated tenants, the inevitable result of having more housing options near campus is that students are much more likely to live on or near campus than in the past. The increased availability of housing near campus has reinforced the trend toward a younger, more residential population. In addition to the
fundamental change of acquiring additional housing units, University Housing has also recently undergone organizational changes:

- In June 2010, University Housing was renamed University Property Management and changed reporting lines from Enrollment Management in Student Affairs to Physical Planning and Development in Finance and Administration. This shift enables the University to take a comprehensive management approach to the growing complexity of the various properties under its control.
- At the same time, Residential Life was removed from reporting to University Housing and folded into the newly constituted Student Life area.
- A new, experienced Director of Residential Life was hired to oversee the integration of a Student Life philosophy into the fabric of daily life for students living in campus residential facilities.

With Residential Life now an integral part of the Student Life area, the University has greatly improved its capacity to create a coordinated, deliberate approach to student programming and development. [CFR 3.1, 3.5, 3.8]

Living/Learning Communities have been an active force in campus residence halls for several years. The primary objective of residential learning and theme housing at SF State is to provide an environment where students can explore the interconnected relationship between what is learned and what is lived. By offering these communities, the University has made a commitment to creating a holistic learning environment that provides peer networking opportunities, increased faculty support, and community-based learning inside and outside of the classroom. [CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13] Currently, the following learning communities are offered for first-time freshmen:

- FASTrack Learning Community – For undeclared students as they decide on a major
- Behavioral & Social Sciences (BSS) Learning Community – For students majoring in programs in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Science & Technology Theme Community – For students majoring in science, mathematics, and engineering fields
- LiFE Learning Community – For students majoring in programs in the College of Health and Human Services
- Humanities Learning Community, IDEA – For students majoring in the College of Humanities
- College of Creative Arts Theme Floor – For students who have declared a major in the College of Creative Arts
- Business Learning Community – For students majoring in or completing a minor in Business

Living/Learning Communities represent an important and active collaboration between Residential Life, and the academic colleges in the effort to assist new, young students in their transition to a successful University life.

Activities/Organizations: The unit in Student Affairs that coordinates student leadership and campus activities at SF State is called LEAD (Leadership, Engagement, Action, Development). LEAD supports SF State students, faculty, and staff by providing leadership development programs, student organization resources, and event coordination and consultation.

As part of the change in campus focus, driven by evolving student demographics, LEAD has become a more essential tool for assuring that students are served well as they grow and mature in their life at the University. LEAD has undertaken several initiatives in recent years in response to the demographic changes:

- A leadership program has been developed to provide training and networking opportunities for students.
• Welcome Days, a two-day program, is offered the week before classes begin to greet new students and their families and introduce them to the campus and its services in an informal and engaging way.
• Staff members responsible for student programming activities in the residence halls have been shifted from Housing to become part of the LEAD staff.
• A comprehensive database (OrgSync) has been set up to allow student organizations to communicate with and keep track of their members.
• Policies and processes for requesting use of campus facilities and space by organizations and individuals have been refined and are more widely disseminated.
• A Leadership Learning Community has been established in Housing to allow incoming students to join like-minded peers who may want to become future student leaders.

These are just a few examples of the numerous initiatives that LEAD has undertaken to address the shift in the demographics and needs of students at SF State.

**Recreation:** The Campus Recreation Department is another student-focused unit that strives to meet the dynamic needs of students by providing programs and services that promote positive physical and mental health; encourage lifetime interest in active, healthy lifestyles; and provide student leadership opportunities that complement the academic experience. [CFR 2.13] Campus Recreation programs enable students, faculty, and staff to achieve a greater understanding of campus life through sport, aquatic, and wellness based activities.

To respond to a growing younger student population, Campus Recreation has expanded to the limit of the campus’s physical and fiscal boundaries. The program offers physical activities in a wide variety of formats, including group fitness, wellness programs, club sports, and intramural sports. The number of students participating in intramural sports has grown dramatically over the past 10 years from 405 students in Fall 2000 to 1,105 students in Fall 2009. Similarly, the number of recreation opportunities available to students has grown dramatically over the past 10 years from 2 clubs to 14 student-led teams that range from martial arts to rugby.

Looking to the future, the Campus Recreation program is partnering with the Associated Students (student government) and the Student Center to plan a new Recreation and Wellness Center to be funded by a small increase in local student fees. When the new Center is finished in 2014, it will provide both residential and commuter students with access to a state-of-the-art facility where students can gather, exercise, socialize, and develop. In the Fall 2010 PULSE survey, 80.2% of students responding indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I would like to see more recreation activities on campus.” In response to another question, 73.9% agreed that they want more intramural sports activities on campus. A new Recreation and Wellness Center will go a long way to respond to this desire for more opportunities for recreational activities. The Master Plan envisions the opportunity to build additional sports and recreation playfields that will serve the recreational needs of a growing, more residential population.

**Campus Grounds:** Perhaps a surprising hallmark of a university set in an urban site is the well-kept lawns and lush urban forest at SF State. The Campus Master Plan describes a campus located in a larger green space network.

In the short term, less grand efforts have already been completed to connect the campus core with the recently acquired residential properties on the perimeter of the campus. Notably, a sloping footpath was built in 2009 that leads from the academic buildings and stadium up to the University Park North apartments, creating a visible and convenient pedestrian and bicycle link for students and University employees who live there.
The need for usable open space on campus remains strong. In satisfaction surveys, students often complain about wanting more space to study, play, and even sit. Despite the addition of the apartments on the north and south of the core campus, SF State continues to have the smallest acreage of all 23 CSU campuses. The long-term Master Plan will address many of these needs and will focus on a greener, more sustainable campus environment.

**Counseling/Psychological Services:** With changing demographics comes a parallel change in students’ needs for counseling and psychological support services. [CFR2.13] The University understands that younger student populations living away from home for the first time have different needs than those of older, more mature students. The trained counselors in the Counseling and Psychological Services unit have observed new and increased demand for mental health and other support services among these younger students.

As one response, in Spring 2010 Counseling and Psychological Services assigned a counselor to set up a satellite office located within the residence halls and make himself available to both students and Residential Life staff in an effort to intervene proactively when mental health concerns arise. Coordination of psychological services with the new Director of Residential Life will be an important component in the overall effort to support new students in their adjustment to the academic and social demands of college life.

**Recommendation 10:** Student Affairs should continue to develop co-curricular offerings that enrich the SF State student experience. [CFR 2.11]

**Capacity Issue:** Are learning styles of the changing campus population different and is pedagogy changing to respond? [CFR 2.10, 4.7]

Equally important to the question of how the University is responding to changing student demographics in terms of co-curricular support is the question of how the University is responding to the changing learning styles of the new student population. [CFR 2.10] To explore this question, several data sets were employed:

- WASC Faculty survey, Fall 2009
- Faculty focus groups, Spring 2010
- WASC Student survey, Fall 2009
- PULSE survey, Spring 2009
- Student focus groups, Spring 2010

**Data Analysis**

In both the faculty and student surveys and focus groups, the responses uniformly pointed to newly developed technologies as the major sources of change in preferred learning modes. The recurring theme in the responses was the ubiquitous nature of technology in students’ lives and their expectations for the rapid interaction that technology provides. Faculty consistently identified the need to use technology to communicate effectively with the current generation of students, though several lamented a loss of attention span that they believe has been reinforced by the use of new technologies. In the December WASC survey, students identified iLearn (the SF State learning management system), podcasts, video conferencing, online exams, and email as the technologies they wanted their professors to use more frequently.

**Academic Technology**

Although the number of students who have taken a purely online class has increased three fold over the past seven years, there is still somewhat of a split in the preference for purely online classes, with 50.9%
in favor of online delivery for classes that are hard to get, 31% preferring online over traditional delivery, and 22.5% saying that they do not prefer online courses. Nonetheless, 95% of SF State students are already very active in the university’s online learning management system, iLearn, and they use it for one or more of their classes. In one month alone (May 2010), students completed 61,568 quiz attempts, 16,541 assignment submissions, and 13,815 forum postings.

The Office of Academic Technology (AT), which supports and advances effective learning, teaching, scholarship, and community service with technology, has focused much research and activity towards this emerging area of need over the past three years. It has also developed a new mission and purpose, a new internal organizational structure that focuses more on faculty and student support, and an expanding suite of integrated and accessible online tools and services. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

Organizationally, universities have been called upon to provide enterprise-level academic technology systems and services that offer the required levels of performance, scalability, and reliability to support the evolving learning and teaching mission of the university in a cost-effective manner. We know that the new generations of learners and faculty expect integrated, innovative, and interoperable online tools to either complement, or fully enable, the delivery of their courses.

Following and often leading a national trend towards implementing customizable open-source learning technologies, AT develops, supports, and optimizes a suite of open-source software environments such as its Moodle-based iLearn. These tools provide similar functionality and usability to social networking and external media sites such as blogs, wikis, media, video, and other activities that students are accustomed to using in their daily lives, However, these SF State-hosted solutions are more secure, more accessible to people with disabilities, and more customizable to the learning and teaching context of the university. [CFR 3.2]

As a complement to iLearn, which often serves as the hub for integrations to relevant educational services, AT’s current suite of learning and teaching technologies includes CourseStream (Lecture capture), DIVA (Digital Virtual Archive), Online Syllabus Tool, POWER (Personal Online Workshop and Events Registration system), LabSpace (virtual access to campus computer lab desktops), FRESCA (Online Faculty Profiles), web conferencing, video conferencing, electronic textbooks, audiovisual equipment, and technology enhanced classrooms and lecture halls.

To further support learner-centered approaches, AT has been recognized by the AAC&U and the CSU as a Center of Excellence for Electronic Portfolios, which have been expanding from the ground up through faculty interest. ePortfolios are currently used in 22 departments for both student and program assessment, and for professional development. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

AT has been working closely with the faculty-led Educational Technology Advisory Committee, university senate committees, and university units to research, implement, promote, and evaluate innovations and best practices to support learner-centered uses of technology. AT has worked with the Senate Student Affairs Committee to research and develop an electronic implementation of online course evaluations, and with the Senate Strategic Issues Committee to develop an online education policy that identifies new course definitions ranging from Traditional, Technology-Enhanced, HyBrid, HyFlex, and Online, and establishes appropriate levels of support for students and faculty to ensure quality of education. [CFR 4.2, 4.6, 4.7]

Assessment of Academic Technology

Students are increasingly drawn to SF State’s HyFlex course offerings, which provide them the opportunity to attend classes face-to-face, online, or a mixture of the two. Enabled by lecture capture technologies, AT is building the infrastructure to target bottleneck courses with this HyFlex approach because it might help students accommodate their preferred learning styles, gain access to impacted courses, and improve their understanding through repeated viewings of lecture materials. AT will be
launching a major study to investigate the educational effectiveness of HyFlex courses compared to Traditional lecture courses, and we will be gathering student and faculty input on their experiences with these new learning environments.

**Strategic Planning of Academic Technology**

AT has also launched its own Go Digital! Campaign and is encouraging faculty and students to work in a digital realm. AT is building a podcasting studio in collaboration with the College of Humanities, preparing podcasting kits for faculty checkout, and helping departments such as the Poetry Center digitize their university assets.

Faculty and students can receive technical help from AT by email, phone, drop-in, chat, and a growing database of online QuickGuides, videos, screencasts, and online professional development courses. In addition, AT has restructured its faculty development and support model to provide a team-based approach to curriculum development for faculty who are converting their courses into new technology-enabled approaches. A cohort of AT staff has recently completed Instructional Technologies graduate degrees to modernize their instructional design skills to better serve faculty. [CFR 3.4, 3.7, 4.7]

The new library, scheduled for January 2012 completion, will further support faculty and students in their technology use by providing three videoconferencing rooms, five enhanced instructional spaces, student and faculty drop-in multimedia development labs, video and audio editing suites, a television studio, a digitization center, and many technology-enhanced student project rooms.

In the next academic year, AT will be working with various planning groups on campus, and especially with students, to develop a purposeful, strategic plan for how emerging technologies can fit within a larger technology vision to enable 21st century learning, teaching, research, and community service. [CFR 4.2]

**Recommendations**

San Francisco State has experienced dramatic changes in the nature of its student population over the past 10 years. Despite the dual challenges of coping with increasing enrollment pressures and living with a reduced budget, the University has made significant attempts to respond to the demographic changes, both in terms of co-curricular activities and support services, and in terms of curricular innovations such as the increased use of technology in the classroom. Campus administrative and faculty leaders are largely aware of the demographic shifts and have demonstrated the capacity to adjust programs and resources to respond to these changes. Though many challenges remain, the organizational structures are in place to continue the efforts to mold the University to serve the new generation of students while continuing to serve the traditional audience it has educated for over one hundred years. As we move into the Educational Effectiveness Review, the following recommendations are offered:

**Recommendation 11:** The University should continue to incorporate academic technology into the academic program as appropriate and assess the impact of these pedagogical changes on student learning. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

The changes in faculty over the past 10 years have been just as dramatic as the changes in the student population. Over 50% of the faculty was hired in the last 10 years, and university data from 1998 and 2008 show a significant increase in the ranks of assistant professor, from 15% to nearly 34%. The ranks of assistant and associate have grown from 35% to 58% of the total of tenured and probationary faculty, while the ranks of professor have decreased during the same period from nearly 64% to just over 42%. The lack of hiring over the past several years will give the University a chance to reestablish more of a balance as the new faculty move through the tenure ranks and older faculty retire.

These changes led the WASC Steering Committee to pose the following question for the Capacity and Preparatory Review:
**Capacity Issue**: What is the impact of the significant faculty hiring at SF State as a previous generation of faculty has retired?

Data gathered to investigate this question include:

- Campus-wide faculty survey, Fall 2009
- ACE/Sloan Institutional Survey, 2008 (40% faculty response rate)
- Faculty focus groups, Spring 2010

**Data Analysis**

Data from the faculty focus groups proved to be most revealing regarding the impact of the changes. Complimenting what students noted in their surveys, faculty commented on students’ reliance on technology, and particularly their need for more visual reinforcement. Although we were unable to quantify the response to this change, many faculty stated that they had changed their own teaching pedagogies to address these student preferences. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5] Faculty also noted that while students might be more expert in the use of technology, such expertise has not necessarily improved their basic skills or preparation for university work. The wide range of student ability, the lack of preparation in basic subjects (writing, critical thinking, oral communication), and inadequate preparation for university work are still challenges for faculty in their teaching and advising, but they are changes that many faculty willingly embrace.

With regard to faculty demographics, many reported that having fewer faculty at the rank of professor has resulted in a smaller pool of individuals who participate in some areas of governance, from department promotions committees to university-wide committees. With the recent increased emphasis on research, many of the new faculty believe that governance and service take time away from their research agendas, which are more heavily weighted in retention and tenure review.

The newer faculty, in particular, pointed out the tension between the increased teaching and service expectations due to budget cuts and the greater emphasis on research and grants. Similarly, the mentoring of new faculty has occurred unevenly, and previous attempts to create a university-wide program have not met with success. In some cases, senior faculty who were not hired with heavy research expectations cannot adequately mentor faculty on moving through a research agenda, and new faculty who are focused on research may not see the value of the service and governance experience of the senior faculty. These conflicting values have created tension in some departments. Because of these issues, the Office of Faculty Affairs has played an increasingly important role among faculty, mentoring them in the development of their academic portfolios. [CFR 3.2, 3.4] In addition, the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects has also played a crucial role in assisting faculty in the development of research agendas and publications.

Of all the issues raised by faculty in open-ended questions on the survey, the one topic that took priority was the impact of the budget cuts. Faculty noted the consequences of these cuts on class size and on teaching, professional development, and service. Yet in spite of the challenges of under-prepared students, lack of funding, and shifting priorities in teaching and research, faculty remain committed to their students and inspired by their colleagues. They expressed a great desire for more opportunities to meet informally with colleagues, and faculty repeatedly lamented the absence of a restaurant or faculty lounge where such meetings could occur. [CFR 3.11]

**Recommendations**

**Recommendation 12**: Changes resulting from recent budget cuts have altered the workload of many faculty members. The role that each RTP area (i.e. teaching, professional achievement, and growth, and service) plays in the evaluation of faculty needs to be clarified and evaluated carefully in an era of scarce resources. [CFR 3.3]
**Recommendation 13:** The University should provide a comfortable place where faculty, staff and administration can meet socially. [CFR 3.4]

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**Essay 3: Improving Student Success in Graduation and Learning**

The theme of student success has led to research and reflection on a number of areas related to students. On the one hand, we examined graduation and retention rates, looking at this more holistic level of student success. However, we also examined this issue by looking at what students have learned at the programmatic level, in others words, student learning outcomes. In addition, we included two curricular efforts that have been in progress for a number of years that we believe will have a major impact on student learning: the Graduation Requirements Task Force (GRTF) Initiative and the Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Discipline Initiative (WAC/WID). Each of these four areas became topics of focus for the third theme of the WASC review.

**Capacity Issue:** Are different populations of students succeeding at similar or different rates?

The University began focusing attention on graduation and retention in 2005 within the context of a CSU system wide initiative. At that time the Facilitating Graduation Task Force (FGTF) was created and charged with making recommendations to improve undergraduate graduation rates. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.7] The recommendations from this group included improving the frequency and type of advising on campus; improving the quality and amount of communication with students; addressing curricular bottlenecks; and, overall, creating a “culture of graduation.” At the time of the FGTF review, the University did not have an office of Academic Institutional Research, and much of the data for a more granular analysis of graduation and retention were not available. Since then, we have developed this office within Academic Planning and Development, making a more careful and in-depth analysis possible for the WASC review. [CFR 4.5]

**Graduation, Retention and Time to Degree**

Although there are many ways to define and analyze success, the WASC Graduation and Retention Subcommittee chose to focus on the big picture by examining graduation and continuation rates and other data broken down by gender, ethnicity, Pell Grant status (to identify financial need), first-time freshmen vs. transfer students, remedial vs. college-ready students, and college/department of major.

In 2005 the overall six-year graduation rate at SF State was 43.3%. For non-under-represented minority students the rate was 46.2%, and for under-represented minorities it was 34.1%. One difficulty historically in terms of determining whether our students were successful was that time to degree (TTD) data have been reviewed and judged based on the four- to six-year graduation rates of full-time, first-time freshmen. The CSU has recently expanded its data collection to look at eight- and nine-year graduation rates; this shows that our students do indeed persist, and given enough time, most who persist beyond one year do graduate. There are still discrepancies along race and gender lines – for example, 75% of female transfers graduate within nine years while just 66% of male students do, and fewer numbers of African-American students are graduating than the rest of the population (61.5% graduate within nine years). In terms of first-time freshmen, within nine years, men and women graduate at almost equal rates, although far more women graduated in a shorter time. While we are about average on graduation rates in the CSU system, the entire system falls behind considerably when compared with other universities in our Carnegie category. Because of this disparity, the Chancellor’s Office has once again taken up the charge of improving graduation rates with a major new initiative, Facilitating Graduation 2 (FG2), which is a

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6 As defined by the CSU Chancellor’s Office, under-represented minority students (URM) are African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos.
follow-on to the 2005-06 project. The purpose of the current initiative is to increase the six-year graduation rates of first time-full time freshmen and transfer students at SF State by 8% by 2015, and to decrease the gap between URM and non-URM students by 50% by 2015.

To respond to this initiative, in Fall 2009 the University created an FG2 Task Force, which developed a five-year plan for the initiative. The plan includes an extensive set of activities to be implemented over the next five years, and these activities will become a part of the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review. We are already beginning to see an increase in six-year graduation rates between the 2002 and 2003 cohorts, which had a 1.7% increase. This increase is likely related to the changes that were put in place during the first Facilitating Graduation Initiative. As we scale up our efforts in this area, continue to collect data, and target specific populations and high impact activities, we believe that the collective result will be a further increase in graduation. [CFR 2.2, 2.3, 2.4]

To begin this effort, we recently disaggregated the graduation rates by college and by department for both first-time-freshmen and transfer students, and further disaggregated the data by URM and non-URM students. We have distributed this information to faculty chairs, and departments are already beginning to compare their rates and set benchmarks. We also plan to implement a migration study over the next year to determine where students go when they change majors and at what point they change majors, particularly in departments where graduation rates are low. Although much works remains to be done, we believe that taken together, all of these activities will have an impact. [CFR 4.4, 4.6]

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the focus group discussions helped the subcommittee develop questions for future use in campus surveys that will lead to an understanding of what factors contribute to successful students. Some of our questions were inspired by a WASC ARC session attended by the subcommittee chair in April 2008 entitled “Achieving the Dream: Student Success through Evidence.” These questions were designed to explore student beliefs about their ability to complete their degree. They included institutional factors such as availability of classes and flexibility of course choices; personal factors such as support from family and friends; university community support such as faculty and other university personnel; and co-curricular activities such as community service, study abroad, independent study, athletics and student clubs. The new questions have been added to the undergraduate exit survey, and student responses will provide direction in focusing on things that matter with regard to student success. [CFR 4.5, 4.7]

Based on all of our analysis we can make four observations with regard to the overall/university-wide graduation rates over time:

1. Time to degree (TTD) for both freshmen and transfers improved between 2003-04 and 2008-09 for virtually all populations: Female/male; Pell Grant/Non-Pell Grant recipients; ethnicity; and regular/exceptional admission. Possible reasons for this change are that fewer FTF students are requiring remediation, SF State’s facilitating graduation efforts are making a difference, mandatory advising initiatives at specific points of students’ college careers are having an effect, and the high cost of living and increased fees give students incentives to take more units each semester.

2. Non-Pell Grant recipients on the whole graduate sooner than Pell Grant recipients. Possible reasons for this difference are that non-Pell Grant students presumably have more parental support and are able to attend full-time. In addition, some grant students may not feel the rush to graduate since they are receiving financial aid.

3. There were more than 1000 more graduates in 2008 than in 2003, despite increasing enrollments and decreasing budgets.

4. Once students begin a major, although time to degree might differ from one major to another, different populations are just as likely to persist and graduate in a particular major.
In general, many factors are leading to decreasing time to degree, and the budget crisis is certainly another important factor. Recent budget realities have forced us to review our priorities and put limits on what students are allowed to do because we can no longer be all things to all people. The positive side of this predicament is that it seems to have helped students focus more on making progress to degree. The negative side is reflected in some comments by some students in focus groups; some feel rushed to graduate and some feel that we are more concerned with increasing the numbers of graduates than with their educational experience. We are clearly in a period of transition with regard to the amount of access that students have to higher education and the focus they need to exercise in making decisions. In response to the budget crisis, the University has implemented a set of enrollment and curriculum controls. Other colleges and universities have practiced some of the controls we have put into effect for many years:

- creating a maximum number of times a student can repeat or withdraw from a course
- requiring high unit seniors to make timely progress toward the degree
- only allowing double majors or minors if a student can complete all requirements within a reasonable number of units

Although commonplace elsewhere, these changes have affected how faculty and students alike view the educational experience. One positive outcome is that these changes have made us pay more attention to whether students are making progress toward a degree. Some students who might previously have fallen through the cracks are getting the assistance they need because we are forcing them to do so. Hopefully, this will increase the number of successful students. [CFR 2.12, 2.13, 2.14]

**Capacity Issue: Are resources being deployed appropriately to ensure that different populations succeed at similar rates?**

A great variety of resources exist for students at SF State, and many of these are aimed at specific populations of students. The Educational Opportunity Program is a program that is committed to increasing the academic excellence and retention of California’s historically underserved students (low income, first-generation college) through its academic support programs. Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded TRIO program, providing intensive academic advising, tutoring, workshops, and financial assistance to approximately 160 students during their first two years of college. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) provides resources, education, and direct services so that people with disabilities have a greater opportunity to succeed at SF State. DPRC serves students with mobility, hearing, visual, communication, psychological, systemic (HIV/AIDS, environmental illness, etc.), and learning disabilities. The Advising Center is a university service staffed by professional counselors, interns, and peer advisors committed to providing guidance and information to help undergraduate students enjoy a successful college experience. In addition, several colleges offer student resource centers to assist declared majors with academic issues (for example, BSS Student Resource Center, College of Business Student Services Center, CHHS Student Resource Center). The Advising Center houses programs for new students, which offer orientations for first-time freshmen and transfer students and their family members. Each year over 10,000 people participate in orientation. In addition, the Advising Center staff monitors and advises students needing remediation in order to improve retention.

The Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) and the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provide campus-wide tutoring services. Some departments and programs offer major- or course-specific tutoring.

As mentioned in Theme Two, we have made great strides as a campus to address the needs of the increasing numbers of younger, residential students. However, we need to remember that a large number of what we used to think of as “non-traditional” SF State students still attend; they live off campus and commute, have family and work obligations, and are perhaps part time and possibly older or re-entry students. We do not know whether we are serving the needs of these students. The nine-year continuation
data now provided by the CSU and the disaggregated campus data may help us at least see whether they are graduating. [CFR 4.5]

As the work for Facilitating Graduation 2 and the WASC EER proceed, we will be assessing these areas and attempting to define where we can target changes that will make a difference. [CFR 2.1, 2.2, 2.3]

**Recommendation 14:** The University should continue the work of the Facilitating Graduation Initiative 2 as planned and as required by the CSU. [CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.7]

**Student Success in Learning**

Student Success must include not only how many students graduate and how quickly they graduate, but also what they learn along the way. Three areas of Theme 3 focused on what students learn: the Graduation Requirements Task Force (GRTF), Writing Across the Curriculum/In the Discipline (WAC/WID), and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment.

**Graduation Requirements Task Force**

The current general education program at San Francisco State University took effect in 1981. Since then there have been substantial changes in knowledge, curricula, and faculty, yet general education has remained the same. In Fall 2005 the SF State Academic Senate passed a policy (F05-237) initiating a reconsideration of all of the requirements for baccalaureate degrees. [CFR 3.11] This policy called for the establishment of a Graduation Requirements Task Force, a self-study of current programs (conducted in Spring 2006), and an external review of those programs (conducted in Fall 2006). [CFR 2.4, 2.7] Those reviewers concluded:

> The current GEP has many problems which may be individually correctable but which in their totality may require rethinking of the entire program from the ground up…. Neither the program nor any of its parts has a clear and sufficiently extensive rationale for its purposes…. Thorough program revision requires first a clear and extensive statement of the purposes of general education that is readily available to both students and faculty members and couched in terms that guide teaching and learning…. More than anything else, SFSU needs a refreshed statement of educational purpose that includes both general education and the major as part of a unified whole that provides clear direction for the undergraduate program.

Following this report, the Task Force reviewed the self-study and the external report and agreed with the reviewers’ recommendation that the first step was to develop broad goals for the baccalaureate. In January 2007 at the SF State University Retreat, the Task Force held multiple meetings to invite campus input about the goals. Task force members also reviewed baccalaureate requirements at multiple universities identified as exemplary programs and studied documents from AAC&U, including *College Learning for the New Global Century: A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP).*

**Capacity Issue:** How should the University respond to the findings of the 2007 General Education review?

In March of 2008, the Academic Senate approved a one page educational goals statement that had been vetted on the GRTF website for response from the entire university community. [CFR 2.4, 2.5]

Throughout the spring of 2008, the Task Force brainstormed potential curricular structures for baccalaureate degrees that will be consistent with the new SF State Baccalaureate Learning Goals and will adhere to our own system GE requirements contained in Title V and the Chancellor’s Office Executive Order 1033 on General Education. The Task Force then drafted requirements for upper division general education and posted them for campus review.
During the fall of 2009, the Task Force completed the draft requirements for lower division general education and developed student learning outcomes for all areas, as well as a structure for implementing the new package. In addition, during the entire 2009-2010 AY, the University Academic Assessment Advisory Committee studied a variety of plans for assessing general education, and agreed on a course-embedded approach that was designed by the SF State College of Education for their NCATE review. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

During Spring 2010, the SF State Academic Senate reviewed and debated the entire GRTF Recommendations Report, and finally approved the report at the end of the spring semester. Hallmarks of the revised GE package include double-counting units in GE and the major, an integrated nine units of upper division general education, and student learning outcomes that include campus educational priorities such as social justice, life-long learning, civic engagement, and environmental sustainability.

It is expected that recertification of courses will begin during AY 2010/2011, and implementation of the new program will begin Fall 2011 in time for the EER visit. The assessment cycle for the program is expected to go forward in AY 2012-13.

**Recommendation 15:** The University should finalize the new baccalaureate degree requirements and begin the certification of courses, implementation, and assessment of the program as soon as possible. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]

### Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Discipline (WAC/WID)

Attention to the importance of writing at SF State began 17 years ago with the formation of the Committee on Written English Proficiency (CWEP), which was established to encourage and support broad and effective faculty participation in the teaching and assessment of student writing. [CFR 2.4, 2.7]

Toward these ends, the committee sponsors a wide array of services and activities in support of curricula and programs that foster the teaching, learning, and assessment of written English. Over the years, CWEP has established criteria for placing students in English writing courses, standards for assessing whether or not they have accomplished the objectives for writing (i.e. the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirements (GWAR) at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and general assessment of the writing program. [CFR 2.4]

**Capacity Issue:** How should the University move forward to improve writing at both the undergraduate and graduate levels?

In 2006, after much research, evaluation, and discussion, CWEP recommended that the Junior Examination for Proficiency in English Test (JEPET) for the GWAR be replaced by a course requirement for writing in the discipline. Following this recommendation, a Writing Across the Curriculum and in the Discipline (WAC/WID) director was hired to establish and implement the program. Over the past two years, the WAC/WID director has worked tirelessly to educate faculty on the value of WAC/WID and to train them in the skills and resources needed to develop quality GWAR courses. The program is currently being phased in, with 60 GWAR courses now approved and being offered. The WAC/WID director is currently gathering data from surveys and focus groups, and is exploring faculty and student perceptions of the value and challenges of this program. Preliminary indirect assessment data indicate that students have difficulty transferring what they have learned in general education English classes to the skills they need to succeed in writing in the disciplines. These findings are consistent with other programmatic assessment findings about the transfer of knowledge from basic skills to advanced application. As we move forward into the EER, the WAC/WID director will examine data on direct learning by comparing student writing in non-GWAR courses with writing in disciplinary GWAR courses. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]
**Recommendation 16**: The University should continue to gather data with regard to the effectiveness of the GWAR courses on student writing, and make adjustments to the WAC/WID program based on the data gathered. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

In addition to undergraduate writing, much attention has been dedicated to graduate writing. When the SF State program review guidelines were revised in the 6th cycle to focus on graduate education, those guidelines included specific writing requirements at the graduate level. Two levels of writing assessment are now required of all graduate programs. Level 1 assessment of graduate writing requires all departments to include an assessment of writing at the time of admissions for all students. Departments may use the GRE writing score, a TOEFL writing exam score, or a score on an assessment that has been developed by the department. Level 2 graduate writing assessment requires that departments conduct an additional writing assessment during students’ graduate experience.

Since the 6th cycle of program review began in 2008, all departments that have been reviewed have successfully initiated the Level 1 graduate writing requirement. While all departments have also initiated the Level 2 requirement, many of them have been using the thesis for this measure. The SF State Graduate Council has been working with departments to develop earlier measures for Level 2 to insure that students who need writing development will receive assistance before they begin the culminating experience. Graduate departments have also been appealing to the WAC/WID director for assistance with graduate writing. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6] The director is working on the implementation of the undergraduate program, and will work with these departments after that. Once the program has been fully implemented, graduate level writing can be phased into the responsibilities of WAC/WID.

**Recommendation 17**: The University should consider requiring graduate departments to implement the Level 2 writing requirement before the culminating experience begins, and assess graduate writing at Level 2 across the campus. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment**

No WASC report would be complete without a thorough presentation and analysis of student learning outcomes. Three levels of the assessment of student learning exist at San Francisco State University: Institutional Assessment, Academic Program Assessment, and Student Affairs Assessment.

**Institutional Assessment**

The Office of Academic Institutional Research (AIR) largely carries out data gathering and analysis for institutional assessment. Five types of measures are ongoing and were used for the WASC CPR report:

- NSSE survey
- FSSE survey
- Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)
- SF State CUSP II strategic plan
- Degrees of Preparation survey

Links and analysis of these measures can be found in the references. The NSSE and FSSE surveys are conducted every two years, while administration of the CLA is required every year by the CSU Chancellor’s Office. The assessment of the CUSP II strategic plan was carried out over a period of years from 2007 until 2010 by committees appointed by Academic Affairs. The Degrees of Preparation survey was conducted in the fall of 2008. SF State was one of 12 university campuses invited to beta test this instrument. The SF State AIR analyzed the results of this survey against all other participating campuses. If the opportunity arises, we expect to participate in the survey again in the future. A great deal of institutional information can also be found on the SF State College Portrait website, which is updated annually. [CFR 2.6, 4.5, 4.6]
Academic Program Assessment

**Capacity Issue:** Does the current program level assessment process give us the appropriate information regarding student learning?

The assessment of academic programs has three strands:

- **Program Review**
- **Scheduled assessment reports**
- **General Education assessment**

Program review at SF State is implemented in cycles. College by college, programs undergo the program review process. When all programs have completed their reviews, a new cycle begins and the program review policy is revised. The university is currently in its 6th cycle of review. As a result of recommendations from the 2001 WASC review, the 6th cycle of review is focusing on graduate programs. The program review process follows the common pattern of a self-study, followed by a visit from two external consultants, a faculty review committee (Academic Program Review Committee, APRC) that writes a final report, and a Concluding Action Memorandum that is signed by the Provost, the dean, and the department chair. [CFR 2.7] A compendium of all 6th cycle review materials, organized by department can be accessed in the references to this report.

Scheduled assessment reports are reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Development, who determines report timelines. Some departments submit reports on an annual basis. [CFR 2.7] Departments that have fully assessed all of their learning outcomes are encouraged to conduct mini-studies on a currently relevant learning issue and are given an appropriate timeline for completion. In the past five years, a number of faculty members have attended the WASC conference to learn about assessment, and several faculty have attended the WASC assessment academies. The Office of Academic Planning and Development regularly offers training sessions on how to write outcomes and construct rubrics.

Whether or not we are obtaining the appropriate information on student learning from program level assessment depends on the department and its attitude toward the assessment process. Most departments that have specialized accreditation are well informed with regard to their students’ learning and are making changes based on that knowledge. In addition, just as many departments without specialized accreditation have embraced the value of assessment and are also making changes. The results across the campus are interesting.

Most students are learning the content of their majors, and departments are generally satisfied with student learning in the major. The places where issues arise are in the use of basic skills in the discipline and the level of learning the prerequisite courses needed to move into the major. Writing continues to be an issue across the curricula, and we expect that over time the WAC/WID initiative, together with changes in our lower division composition program, will yield discernible improvement in the quality of student writing. In a variety of fields, the ability of students to analyze a problem or a situation often comes up in departmental assessment reports. A number of programs, notably Computer Science and the College of Business, have turned their attention to soft skills such as teamwork, self-directed responsibility for timeliness, and communication skills as major areas of focus. The focus on soft skills has come as a result of feedback from employers and alumni. [CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7]

Needless to say, there are still a few departments that are resistant to assessment, even when they are allowed to develop qualitative, constructivist approaches and methods. Departments that have demonstrated strong pushback on assessment typically have one of two characteristics. In some cases, departments are composed of sub-disciplines that differ to a large degree in their perspectives and values. In these cases, assessment is difficult because the faculty cannot agree on the skills and knowledge that they value, and so determining what to measure is the sticking point. Another impasse occurs in
departments that have an individualistic culture. In these cases, it is difficult for the faculty to view the
student experience from a programmatic level, which obviously is necessary for program assessment. We
are still working with these departments and have made much progress in the past year due to the
exigencies of the imminent WASC visit. The Educational Effectiveness summary grid and the most
recent departmental assessment reports for all departments can be accessed on the Academic Planning and
Development website.

General Education assessment is in the process of revision. As noted earlier in this essay, a new
Baccalaureates Requirements package, which includes General Education, was passed by the Academic
Senate in the spring of 2010, and implementation is slated to begin Fall 2012. A structure for
implementing and assessing the new General Education program was included in that document, along
with specification of course expectations and student learning outcomes for each area of GE that are
aligned with the Baccalaureate Learning Goals (pp. 4-46). [CFR 2.2] During the 2009-10 academic year,
the University Academic Assessment Committee recommended a course-embedded assessment procedure
that will allow faculty members to score students electronically on specific learning outcomes as they
enter their course grades. The system will allow for this data to be aggregated in order to assess all GE
areas as well as the Baccalaureate Learning Goals. [CFR 2.2, 2.4]

Student Affairs Assessment

Capacity Issue: What processes need to be implemented in order to assess the impact of student
services on student learning?

The Division of Student Affairs at San Francisco State University launched its inaugural assessment
program in April 2009. Prior to that date, units within Student Affairs focused primarily on individual
program improvement efforts. In preparation for the WASC Capacity and Preparatory Review scheduled
for March 2011, Student Affairs shifted the focus and began a deliberate effort to bring student learning
outcomes to the forefront. The move from a student satisfaction/program improvement model to a student
learning outcome-based model resulted in a report that describes the assessment plans that were
developed and implemented within Student Affairs units during the 2009-10 academic year. [CFR 2.3]

To begin this effort, Student Affairs directors received a two-day training program conducted by Lori
Varlotta, Vice President for Student Affairs at California State University Sacramento. The training
program helped Student Affairs directors understand the basics of assessment:

- Aligning the department mission with the missions of the Student Affairs Division and the
University. In some cases, the departments needed to craft new mission statements.
- Identifying the two to three overarching planning goals to broadly frame their work during the
upcoming years.
- Articulating at least three significant student learning outcome and/or program outcomes to
achieve for students who participate in their programs or utilize their services.

Directors were asked to develop instruments and collect data to measure the student learning that
occurred. As might be expected in an inaugural effort at identifying measurable outcomes, some
instruments and assessment approaches proved to be more valuable than others. The second cycle of
developing and measuring outcomes will be greatly improved based on the experience gained in 2009-10.
The foundation for evidence-based decision-making and outcome-based assessment will be used to create
more robust assessment plans for the next cycle in 2010-11.

The report details the assessment plans created by each unit in Student Affairs. Assessment plans for the
following Student Affairs departments are included:

- Athletics
- Campus Recreation
In Spring 2010, an associate vice president of student affairs was charged with overseeing strategic planning and assessment for the division. This appointment and the process that has been set in place will provide the division with the capacity to continue to evaluate its work in terms of student learning.

**Student Academic Services Assessment**

Three offices within Undergraduate Studies currently provide advising and tutorial assistance to undergraduate students are the Advising Center, Learning Assistance Center (LAC), and Campus Academic Resource Program.

The Advising Center is a university service staffed by professional counselors, interns, and peer advisors committed to providing guidance and information to help undergraduate students enjoy a successful college experience. The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides skill-based tutoring across disciplines by students for students. Through collaboration with programs, departments, and the larger campus community, the LAC works to respond to the diverse needs of SF State students. The Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) is student run and offers full-service tutoring to all SF State students. CARP services include evening academic support programs, in-class outreach to advertise the CARP services, and workshops to develop student college success skills and to prepare students for a variety of campus exams.

These three academic service programs have conducted narrative reviews of their work for many years. Nonetheless, the Academic Services Managers were included in the two-day assessment training program conducted by Dr. Lori Varlotta. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies concluded that the training could provide the advisors and tutoring professionals with knowledge and skills that would lead to a more learning-centered evaluation of their services. Subsequent to that training, each program developed student learning outcomes and measures, and collected data. The first set of results provides baseline data for the programs. By the time of the EER, we should have data over several years, allowing for programmatic evaluation. Data on the 2009-2010 assessment of academic student services can be accessed in the references to this report.

**Recommendation 18**: Student Affairs and Academic Student Services should continue their newly developed assessment processes, making programmatic adjustments as indicated by the results. [CFR 2.3]
Section III: Conclusion

The work we have done for this Capacity Review has given us an opportunity to examine what we do well, and to envision a future where we continue to serve our mission of Social Justice and Civic Engagement and improve our ability to serve a student body and faculty that have changed in dramatic ways in the past 10 years. In our efforts to facilitate graduation and retention rates and revise and implement programs that will improve the educational experiences of students, we recognize both our accomplishments and our challenges. During our Educational Effectiveness review, we look forward to implementing the recommendations from this Capacity Review to expand the ways that we can better meet the needs of our students and faculty.

We are ready to implement a number of processes and policies to augment the ways that we demonstrate our commitment to social justice and civic engagement. Recommendations one through eight highlight the changes we will make in the institution, and the steps we will take to build capacity to support the campus mission and to strengthen and better recognize the work of faculty related to its mission.

SF State has a longstanding campus commitment to support a diverse student body and the success of all students. Despite the budget cuts and a student population that has undergone rapid growth and significant changes in the past 10 years, administration, faculty, staff and students have made accommodations to manage these changes. As we move into the Educational Effectiveness Review, we are developing strategies for departments to bring their academic planning and budgeting in line with the number of students they are able to matriculate, and we have already begun the task of incorporating academic technology that better meets the needs of both students and faculty [Recommendations 9, 10 & 11].

We will address the changes in faculty workload that have resulted from budget cuts, the increased population of newly-hired junior faculty, and the retirement of a great many senior faculty by not only examining how faculty are evaluated in the RTP areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, but also by finding ways to encourage junior faculty to take on service and governance activities. To this end, we will take steps to clarify how these activities can be accomplished in the face of scarce resources and the demands of teaching and scholarship [Recommendation 12, 13]. We will also provide a comfortable place where faculty can meet socially and make the kind of connections that were lost when the faculty club closed several years ago.

Many factors, including the budget crisis and the enrollment and curriculum controls recently established by the University, have led to a decreasing time to degree that has had both positive and negative outcomes. Because we have been paying more attention to how students progress to graduation, students who need assistance are getting it because we are forcing them to do so.

The Facilitating Graduation Task Force (FGTF) has already made a number of recommendations that will be implemented over the next five years and will become a part of the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review. In addition, the recommendations of the revised GE requirements developed by the Graduation Requirements Task Force and passed by the Academic Senate in Spring 2010 will be finalized, implemented and assessed as soon as possible, and the recommendations of the Writing Task Force will be addressed and assessed [Recommendations 14-17]. As this occurs, student learning outcomes will continue to be assessed at the institutional, academic program, and student affairs levels, and programmatic adjustments indicated by the results will be made [Recommendation 18].

These recommendations from the WASC Capacity and Preparatory Review subcommittees provide a roadmap for the activities and products of the SF State Educational Effectiveness Review.
**Summary of CPR Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** Campus decisions regarding budget cuts must go beyond financial considerations and examine the impact on the university mission. [CFR 3.5]

**Recommendation 2:** The University should adopt and communicate a common definition of social justice for the campus community. [CFR 1.1, 1.2]

**Recommendation 3:** Where appropriate, course syllabi should indicate how learning objectives align with the university mission. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

**Recommendation 4:** The University should consider and determine whether to award academic credit to students for community-based learning. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]

**Recommendation 5:** A task force should be created to recommend ways to increase awareness of civic engagement opportunities for students. [CFR 1.2, 2.2]

**Recommendation 6:** The University would benefit from an ombudsperson or office specifically designed to handle discrimination-related issues. [CFR 1.5, 2.13]

**Recommendation 7:** The University should develop definitions and standards for recognizing accomplishments in the area of community engaged scholarship. [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

**Recommendation 8:** Departments should develop criteria in their RTP policies that allow for the recognition of work related to social justice and civic engagement within the three RTP categories (i.e. teaching, professional achievement and growth, and service). [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

**Recommendation 9:** Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management, located in Student Affairs, should work together to develop methodologies for departments to analyze their optimal size given their current resources, and they should align their academic planning and budgeting within these analyses. [CFR 3.5]

**Recommendation 10:** Student Affairs should continue to develop co-curricular offerings that enrich the SF State student experience. [CFR 2.11]

**Recommendation 11:** The University should continue to incorporate academic technology into the academic program as appropriate and assess the impact of these pedagogical changes on student learning. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

**Recommendation 12:** Changes resulting from recent budget cuts have altered the workload of many faculty members. The role that each RTP area (i.e. teaching, professional achievement, and growth, and service) plays in the evaluation of faculty needs to be clarified and evaluated carefully in an era of scarce resources. [CFR 3.3]

**Recommendation 13:** The University should provide a comfortable place where faculty, staff and administration can meet socially. [CFR 3.4]

**Recommendation 14:** The University should continue the work of the Facilitating Graduation Initiative 2 as planned and as required by the CSU. [CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.7]

**Recommendation 15:** The University should finalize the new baccalaureate degree requirements and begin the certification of courses, implementation, and assessment of the program as soon as possible. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]
**Recommendation 16:** The University should continue to gather data with regard to the effectiveness of the GWAR courses on student writing, and make adjustments to the WAC/WID program based on the data gathered. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

**Recommendation 17:** The University should consider requiring graduate departments to implement the Level 2 writing requirement before the culminating experience begins, and assess graduate writing at Level 2 across the campus. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

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### WASC Acronyms Key

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<tr>
<td>AERM</td>
<td>(American Ethnic and Racial Minorities) A course category in General Education at SF State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>(Academic Institutional Research).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APD/APEE</td>
<td>Office of Planning and Development (APD), previously called Office of Academic Planning and Educational Effectiveness (APEE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>(Office of Academic Technology).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLG</td>
<td>(Baccalaureate Learning Goals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
<td>(Criteria for Review) Specific WASC requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARP</td>
<td>(Campus Academic Resources Program).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESD</td>
<td>(Cultural, Ethnic, or Social Diversity) A course category in General Education at SF State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>(Capacity/Preparatory Review) The second stage of the WASC review, which focuses on infrastructure issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>(Collegiate Learning Assessment) A value-added test of critical thinking and writing administered to freshmen and seniors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>(California State University).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWEP</td>
<td>(Committee on Written English Proficiency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRC</td>
<td>(Disabilities Programs and Resource Center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EER</td>
<td>(Educational Effectiveness Review) The third stage of the WASC review, which focuses on student learning and educational effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOP</td>
<td>(Educational Opportunity Program).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGTF</td>
<td>(Facilitating Graduation Task Force) A SF State task force that is studying graduation and retention and implementing activities designed to increase graduation rates and time to degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSSE</td>
<td>(Faculty Survey of Student Engagement) Survey of faculty that measures their opinions regarding student engagement with their academic experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRTF</td>
<td>(Graduation Requirements Task Force) A SF State task force that developed a revised General Education program, baccalaureate vision statement, and baccalaureate learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWAR</td>
<td>(Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement) The final writing requirement for all SF State graduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Courses that combine face-to-face contact with the instructor and online instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyflex</td>
<td>Courses in which student have the choice of attending class or watching the class through lecture capture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCE</td>
<td>(Institute for Community and Civic Engagement).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>(Learning Assistance Center).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>(Liberal Education &amp; America’s Promise) An AAC&amp;U Council on liberal education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSSE</td>
<td>(National Survey of Student Engagement) Professionally developed survey of freshmen and seniors that measures the behaviors of students that are related to their engagement with their academic experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORSP</td>
<td>(Office of Research and Sponsored Projects).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PULSE</td>
<td>SF State survey of students administered every semester during online registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP</td>
<td>(Retention, Tenure, and Promotion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMS</td>
<td>(Student Information Management System) The SF State database system that manages student data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTD</td>
<td>(Time to degree).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>(University of California).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPAC</td>
<td>(University Planning and Advisory Council) Strategic Planning Group initiated by President Corrigan in Fall 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASC</td>
<td>(Western Association of Schools and Colleges) The regional accrediting association for the Western United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAC/WID</td>
<td>(Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Discipline) A writing approach that infuses writing into the genre of specific discipline such as scientific writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Capacity and Preparatory Review is designed to enable the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Commission to determine whether an institution fulfills the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity: “The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures and processes to fulfill its purposes.” In keeping with the Commission’s goal of a focused accreditation process that permits adaptation and responsiveness to institutional contexts and priorities, San Francisco State University elected to conduct its Capacity and Preparatory Review and its Educational Effectiveness Review with a focus on three themes:

- Social Justice and Civic Engagement
- The Changing University
- Student Success

The activities surrounding this cycle of reaccreditation for San Francisco State University began in Spring 2007 with the appointment of the WASC Steering Committee by President Robert A. Corrigan. Under the leadership of the Provost, the Steering Committee developed the SF State Institutional Proposal after an extensive self-review following the WASC guidelines in the 2001 Handbook of Accreditation. The first theme (Social Justice and Civic Engagement) represents two of the university’s strategic priorities, which are embedded in the SF State psyche and programs in myriad ways. [CFR 1.1] Preserving and maintaining those priorities is essential to the future of the university, and for this reason, it was chosen as a theme. The two remaining themes (The Changing University and Student Success) represent issues that are crucially important to the current context of the university. Deep engagement with these issues across the campus, both in terms of capacity and educational effectiveness, will facilitate the university’s ability to respond to current trends and needs.

Preparation of the Capacity and Preparatory Review

The Capacity and Preparatory Review activities began in January 2009, immediately following the approval of the SF State WASC Institutional Proposal. [CFR 1.9] Theme subcommittees were established for Social Justice, Civic Engagement, Changing Student Demographics, Changing Faculty, and Graduation and Retention. During the 2009-10 academic year, the Social Justice and Civic Engagement subcommittees were merged when one of the subcommittee chairs took a leave of absence. The sub-themes of Assessment, General Education, and Writing are ongoing projects with long-established committee structures, so the WASC review work was folded into the work of these committees.

The subcommittees spent Spring 2009 studying the WASC process, considering the relevant issues surrounding their topics, and refining the research questions that the subcommittees would study. The subcommittee chairs worked through Summer 2009 to evaluate the research questions.

The Office of Academic Institutional Research (AIR) identified the questions for which the University already had data. [CFR 4.5] The chairs determined which of the remaining questions were suitable for survey questionnaires and which were more appropriate for focus group discussion. Following this determination, the subcommittee chairs and AIR developed several sets of questionnaires for faculty, staff, administration, and students to investigate the campus community views regarding the specific research questions. The surveys were administered during Fall 2009. The subcommittee chairs and AIR analyzed the

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Based on committee discussions, the focus group questions were modified and refined. During Spring 2010, the chairs of the WASC Capacity and EER Reviews and the staff of Academic Planning and Development organized and conducted 20 focus groups involving staff, faculty, administration, and students. The CPR and the EER chairs, who conducted the focus groups, recruited their own students to assist in the focus group process. These students attended independent study courses (taught by the chairs) that covered the principles and methods in focus group research. Following the classroom component, the students recorded the focus groups, analyzed the data, and wrote summaries for each focus group discussion. The transcripts and summaries were then passed to the appropriate subcommittees, who then deliberated on all data collected. At the end of Spring 2010, each subcommittee submitted a final report to the WASC Capacity and Preparatory Chair for evaluation and synthesis. The following three essays summarize the findings and conclusions contained in these final reports and suggest recommendations for the Educational Effectiveness Review.

It should be noted that the subcommittees followed the logical paths of their research rather than strictly adhering to institutional capacity issues. As a result, some of the recommendations for the EER are related to capacity and some are related to student learning and educational effectiveness. This approach seems appropriate for the SF State review.

Financial Context of the SF State Capacity Review

The SF State Capacity/Preparatory Review has occurred within the context of an unprecedented financial crisis that has had an impact on this campus and all of California higher education. Funding to the CSU and UC systems has diminished incrementally over the past 15 years, with a precipitous drop in 2009-2010 in the face of competing social service needs and a reluctance on the part of the legislature to raise taxes. Over the past two years alone the CSU has seen state support cut by $625 million or 21%. SF State alone lost $47.5 million, and the legislature now provides less than 50% of SF State’s funding.

In the midst of California’s continuing budget crisis, San Francisco State is relying upon a network of campus members including faculty, staff, administrators and students to do what we have done as a university community for many years – assemble facts and examine options to determine how best to uphold the university’s mission in the face of shrinking revenues. [CFR 1.3]

It is clear that we will not be able to continue to operate the University as we have in the past. During the 2009-10 AY, 350 fewer course sections (10%) were offered and the faculty and staff furlough of two days per month undoubtedly had an impact on quality. In the 2010-11 academic year, the furlough ended, and the University was able to augment class offerings by using federal stimulus dollars to bring class availability back to the level required to minimally serve our students. Unfortunately, that funding is limited to this academic year, so the University is using the 2010-11 year as a period of transition, and several steps are underway to guide the transition.

The University Planning and Advisory Council (UPAC) was formed in November 2009 to solicit campus feedback and assist in re-envisioning SF State by considering ways in which the University might be restructured and streamlined to make better use of the funds available to us. The work of this council is not yet finished or approved, but it is expected that the council will recommend, along with a number of other cost-cutting measures, transitioning to a six-college structure rather than an eight-college configuration. In addition to the work of UPAC, the Provost’s Task Force on Capacity is looking at ways to determine the optimum size and balance within academic programs in a more intentional way than we have done in the past. [CFR 3.5, 4.1, 4.2] Also the recent 5% student fee increase for Spring 2011 and the 10% proposed increase for Fall 2011, will provide greatly needed resources to the University. In short, we are working diligently to maintain a high quality of education at SF State without seriously altering the university’s mission of social justice and civic engagement or its commitment to access. [CFR 1.5]
As the budget crisis has unfolded, President Corrigan and his Cabinet have remained in touch with the campus community through frequent emails and town hall meetings specifically focused on the budget. At the beginning of the 2009-10 academic year, a special forum was organized in which every Vice President, Associate Vice President, and Academic Dean provided a report on the impact the budget cuts had on their academic units. In addition, the University created a “Budget Central” website, which provides summary explanations of the budget crisis as well as frequent updates regarding legislative actions. [CFR 1.3, 3.10] Also, several town hall meetings to address UPAC and the budget were conducted during Fall 2010. We do not know the answers to all of the questions related to the budget at this time, but we do know that our common values of access, quality education, social justice, and civic engagement – and our commitment to the institution and one another – will sustain us.

Section II: Reflective Essays

Essay 1: Demonstrating Commitment to Social Justice and Civic Engagement

Historical Context
In October, 2009, the university community celebrated the 40th anniversary of the events in 1968-69 when students of the Black Student Union and Third World Liberation Front, staff and faculty, as well as members from the larger Bay Area community, organized and led a series of actions to protest systematic discrimination, lack of access, neglect, and misrepresentation of histories, cultures, and knowledge of indigenous peoples and communities of color within the university's curriculum and programs. Their actions led to the establishment of four departments – Asian American Studies, Black Studies, La Raza Studies, and Native American Studies – and the creation of the College of Ethnic Studies, still the only college of its kind in the nation. These events remain a signature of the University.

Mission and Strategic Plan
SF State continues to pride itself on its identity as an institution that values social justice, equity, and civic engagement. [CFR 1.5] This identity permeates the University in mission statements and strategic planning, addresses by administrators, and curricular design. In his preamble to the SFSU Bulletin, President Robert A. Corrigan highlights engagement as one of our “… proudest characteristics. San Francisco State has been a strong community partner for more than 100 years [and] has achieved national recognition for its success in building community service into its academic program.” The Commission on University Strategic Planning (CUSP II) also emphasizes this commitment in Goal I of its strategic plan [CFR 4.1, 4.2]:

San Francisco State University demonstrates commitment to its core values of equity and social justice through the diversity of its students and employees, the content and delivery of its academic programs and support systems, and the opportunities for both campus and external constituencies to engage in meaningful discourse and activity. – CUSP II Strategic Plan 2005

Institutes and Centers
The focus of research efforts at many of our institutes is indicative of this identity. The Cesar E. Chavez Institute studies and documents the impact of social oppression on the health, education, and the well-being of disenfranchised communities in the United States. The Institute for Sexuality, Social Inequality and Health initiates basic research, educational, and social policy initiatives regarding the effects of social inequality on sexuality and health. The Institute for Civic and Community Engagement provides opportunities for civic engagement and leadership development for students, faculty, and community
members. The *Institute on Disability* advances research on the nature of disability while also introducing the topic into the curricula campus-wide. The *Center for Integration & Improvement of Journalism* develops a means of increasing the recruitment, retention, graduation, and placement of ethnic minority journalists with the intent to bring diversity to the country's newsrooms while promoting an improved and balanced coverage of our multicultural society. The *Health Equity Institute* integrates research, curricula, community service, and training programs that address health disparities in the United States. [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

**Curriculum**

In the fall of 2005, the Academic Senate created the Graduation Requirements Task Force (GRTF) and called for an assessment of “the appropriateness and value of the university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements currently required of all SF State undergraduate students.” [CFR 2.7, 4.6, 4.7] In Spring 2010, the Academic Senate passed the final report. Social justice and diversity issues are infused throughout the new curricular design. Of the six overarching Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLG) of the program, two speak directly to diversity and engagement goals. To achieve *appreciation of diversity*, graduates will “know, understand, and appreciate multiple forms and variations of human diversity, both within the United States and globally. Graduates will respect themselves and others. They will have obtained a historical perspective about the development of our diverse nation and will be able to engage in informed, civil discourse with persons different from themselves in intellectual and cultural outlook.” To develop the quality of *ethical engagement*, graduates will “recognize their responsibility to work toward social justice and equity by contributing purposefully to the well-being of their local communities, their nations, and the people of the world, as well as to the sustainability of the natural environment.” These goals are further infused throughout the new lower division curriculum package with specific student learning outcomes on diversity, social justice, and civic engagement specified for each area of the curriculum. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

In the upper division, the proposed General Education options include a choice of nine “topical perspectives.” Students will choose one topic and will take three courses from that topical area. Of these topics, two, *Life in the San Francisco Bay Area* and *Social Justice and Civic Knowledge/Engagement*, specifically involve opportunities for engaged learning. In the former, courses might address subjects such as “urban and other communities, neighborhoods, social-cultural characteristics, government and politics, progressive or populist movements, and social activism.” In the latter, students will “explore their responsibility to work toward social justice and equity by contributing to the well-being of their local communities, their nations and the people of the world.” Other topical areas intersect with the civic mission as well. For example, in *Personal and Community Well-Being*, courses might address environmental sustainability and community revitalization, and in *Human Diversity*, courses will encourage a respectful “appreciation of differences among individuals and groups.” For further information regarding the new General Education package, see Essay III of this report.

In addition to the new design for General Education, the undergraduate curriculum will continue to include an American Ethnic and Racial Minorities requirement which recognizes “race” as an historically and socially constructed category that has created racial minority populations that have been “excluded from sustained influence on, access to, and participation in structures and institutions and the privilege and power deriving from such exclusion.”

In summary, San Francisco State remains a campus conscious of its activist past and continues its dedication to progressive approaches to addressing the disparities and inequities between social groups. It is this context in which we have chosen social justice, equity and civic engagement as a WASC theme and have raised the capacity issue stated in our Institutional Proposal:

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2 The GE requirements will include three options – topical perspective or integrated study or study abroad.
3 In addition to the Graduation Requirements, the Academic Senate has added a new “sustainability” requirement.
**Capacity Issue:** To what extent does the institution’s infrastructure support issues of social justice, equity, and civic engagement? (CFR: 3.1, 4.4, 4.5)

In the face of the current budget crisis in California, this issue has become critical for the campus. As one student remarked in our recently conducted WASC survey, “I was involved in my own community and had to stop. Working full-time and going to school full-time is all I can do.” Faculty members echoed this sentiment as well. One wrote:

I came to SFSU because of its commitment to social justice and because of the university's commitment to ethnic students … I am afraid that the budget crisis will be used as an excuse to move away from those commitments. I hope that is not the case.

**Methods**

In examining institutional capacity, the subcommittee on Social Justice and Civic Engagement drew data from multiple sources, including institutional surveys and focus groups of students, staff and faculty. The sources used for this analysis are:

- NSSE 2007 and 2008 survey
- Degrees of Preparation survey
- Assessment of the Social Justice Strategic Planning Goal
- PULSE survey
- Faculty Perceptions of Institutional Barriers to and Facilitators of Community Engaged Scholarship at SFSU
- Student, Faculty, and Staff WASC surveys
- Student and Faculty focus groups

**Commitment to Social Justice, Equity, and Civic Engagement**

SF State is renowned for its commitment to social justice and civic engagement. In 2006, SF State was one of only 62 U.S. colleges and universities selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for the new Community Engagement Classification in both the Curricular Engagement and Outreach & Partnerships category. The designation recognized the university's substantial commitments to “teaching, learning and scholarship which engage faculty, students and community in mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration.”

For three subsequent years, 2006 through 2008, the university was a recipient of the President of the United States Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll Award with Distinction presented by the Corporation for National and Community Service, in recognition of the university's community service efforts.

Beyond institutional recognition, SF State’s reputation is well established among faculty who seek employment here. In the WASC Faculty Survey conducted in 2009, faculty were asked, “How important was SF State’s commitment to social justice in your decision to seek a position here?” More than 55% of the respondents indicated that the commitment was either “very important” or “important” in their decision. In the WASC Student Survey, students were asked whether or not they agreed with the statement, “SF State demonstrates its commitment to social justice and equity through its policies, practices and procedures.” Again, nearly 57% strongly agreed or agreed.

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4 Internal report written by Juliana van Olphen, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Education, Connie Ulasewicz, Assistant Professor, Department of Consumer and Family Studies/Dietetics, and Dave Walsh, Associate Professor, Department of Kinesiology, 2008.
Engagement Activities

Within this commitment, the University provides an array of curricular and co-curricular activities to support engagement leading to the development of civic and social justice values. [CFR 2.5, 2.11] Several of the university’s survey instruments were examined to determine who participated in these activities and what types of experiences they encountered. In the NSSE 2007 survey, freshmen and seniors were asked whether or not they “had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity” than their own. Sixty percent of freshmen and 66% of senior respondents indicated that they had.

In Figure 1 below, responses to a similar question on the extent to which the institution emphasizes and encourages “contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds” are compared between SF State respondents and those at other (a) urban universities, (b) comparable universities, and (c) all NSSE participating universities. The analysis indicates that SF State has significantly greater emphasis and encouragement than institutions in each of the other categories. [CFR 2.6, 2.7]

![Figure 1](image.png)

**Figure 1**

Institutional Emphasis on Diverse Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Series1</th>
<th>SFSU</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>NSSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q10C: To what extent does your institution emphasize the following: Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds? (Results = Very Often + Often). Seventy-one percent of freshman respondents and 54% of senior respondents believe that the University encourages contact among students from different backgrounds.

The Institute for Community and Civic Engagement (ICCE) coordinates campus service learning, collects data on faculty and student involvement, promotes faculty and student participation in civic engagement, and conducts research regarding the educational impact of these activities. Last year, an internal survey conducted by ICCE indicated that during Academic Year 2008-2009, SF State students enrolled in 527 course sections in which community service learning was an integrated course element. These sections enrolled a total of 11,261 students or 38% of the total student population. Those who opted to participate in a community service learning course provided more than 506,000 hours of service. Included in this number are the nearly 100,000 hours that social work students provide to hospitals, clinics, homeless shelters, and other programs. Many students earn educational awards for their stellar service. During AY 2008-09, SF State placed #1 out of 89 higher education institutions in California by awarding $147,000 in Students in Service educational scholarships for performing 51,000 hours of service in their communities. [CFR 2.6, 2.7]
In addition to community service and interaction with others in the classroom and beyond, SF State has made great efforts to encourage students to vote in public elections. During 2008, for example, the voter registration efforts assisted more than 5,000 SF State students to register and vote. Student participation in voting was particularly successful\(^5\). Though only 30\% of freshmen voted in the federal election, 90\% of seniors indicated that they had voted. [CFR 2.6, 2.7] The success of these efforts has led to the campus becoming its own voter precinct. SF State also ranks 16th in the nation among all U.S. colleges and universities for the number of Peace Corps volunteers it has inspired.

Outcomes

The combination of the institutional mission of social justice, faculty dedication, and community engagement can be seen in many ways. In 2009, San Francisco State ranked 12th nationally after awarding 2,700 baccalaureate degrees to minorities during the 2007-08 academic year, an 11\% increase from the previous year. In the sciences, SF State has a particularly noteworthy record for successfully graduating underrepresented students. In July 2009, Biology Professor Frank Bayliss received a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring from President Barack Obama for his work with the Student Enrichment Opportunities (SEO) office that Dr. Bayliss founded nearly 20 years ago. The office provides financial support and mentoring to students in the sciences from the undergraduate to doctoral level and now helps send 20 to 25 underrepresented minority students from SF State to doctoral programs each year. Several of our surveys provide meaningful analysis of the effectiveness of the undergraduate program on raising students’ abilities and involvement. In the PULSE 2010 survey, 72\% of the students rated their SF State coursework as Good or Excellent. Figure 2 below, taken from the Degrees of Preparation survey, indicates a significant increase in the effectiveness of civic skills from freshman year to senior year in several categories. Students were asked to self-rate their frequency and effectiveness in each of the categories shown. All differences between freshman and senior year are statistically significant (n > 1300).

\(^5\) Some of the increase is attributable to the interest in the 2008 election by young voters.
Recommendations

Though proud of our accomplishments there is room for improvement. Our analysis has led to eight recommendations that will help build capacity to support the campus mission. These recommendations fall into three categories: Recommendations for the institution as a whole, recommendations involving students and curricula, and recommendations involving faculty.

Recommendations for the institution as a whole

**Recommendation 1:** Campus decisions regarding budget cuts must go beyond financial considerations and examine the impact on the university mission. [CFR 3.5]

The budget crisis within California has had a major deleterious impact on the campus budget. Student fee increases will impact the poorest students the most. Layoffs of lecturers and gaps in staff hiring may have a negative effect on programs that support equity and access. As discussions on the budget cuts move forward, the University should include the impact of budget cuts on social justice and diversity goals in its considerations.

**Recommendation 2:** The University should adopt and communicate a common definition of social justice for the campus community. [CFR 1.1, 1.2]

Throughout the deliberation and survey processes, we have discovered that there are no single definitions of social justice or civic engagement that are used commonly throughout the campus. The Graduation Requirements Task Force report passed by the Senate offers a good starting point with the description of the curriculum in the social justice/civic engagement category. However, in order to focus scarce resources and to determine whether or not the objectives of these goals have been achieved, refinement of these definitions will be useful. Multiple definitions may be adopted as appropriate, and the campus will benefit from prominently displaying the definitions on website banners. The following recommendation is in a similar vein.

Recommendations involving students and curricula

**Recommendation 3:** Where appropriate, course syllabi should indicate how learning objectives align with the university mission. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

While course syllabi are currently required to show the alignment between the course outcomes and the program outcomes, they are not required to show the alignment between courses and the Baccalaureate Learning Goals or the university mission. The requirement for including the alignment of mission and Baccalaureate Learning Goals in course approval packages and on course syllabi will ensure learning in mission-related areas. This change will create alignment between strategic goals and student learning at the course level and will become an important issue in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

**Recommendation 4:** The University should consider and determine whether to award academic credit to students for community-based learning. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]

Many of the community service learning, problem based learning, culminating experience, and other courses require students to perform 60 to 100 hours of work in the field to complement traditional classroom-based learning. Often students perform these activities and the corresponding reflection without earning additional course credit and without being paid. Departments should be charged with examining the credit allocation in these courses to determine whether the awarding of credit is equitable. In order to accomplish this change, the Academic Senate should determine the appropriate committee for implementing this change and the administrative process for maintaining the academic records.

In the student survey, students were asked whether or not they knew where to find more information about opportunities to participate in community service both related and unrelated to courses. Surprisingly we found that many students did not know how to do this. Thus, we are led to the recommendation below.
**Recommendation 5:** A task force should be created to recommend ways to increase awareness of civic engagement opportunities for students. [CFR 1.2, 2.2]

The 2010 student PULSE survey raised the issue of how often students experienced or observed insensitive behavior or discrimination. The table below summarizes the responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3372</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented, more than 20% of students have experienced or observed these incidents. These data motivated the suggestion to establish an office where students, faculty, and staff can go to discuss these problems when they arise.

**Recommendation 6:** The University would benefit from an ombudsperson or office specifically designed to handle discrimination-related issues. [CFR 1.5, 2.13]

**Recommendations involving faculty**

The following two recommendations concern steps the University should take to strengthen and recognize the work of faculty related to its mission.

**Recommendation 7:** The University should develop definitions and standards for recognizing accomplishments in the area of community engaged scholarship. [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

**Recommendation 8:** Departments should develop criteria in their RTP policies that allow for the recognition of work related to social justice and civic engagement within the three RTP categories (i.e. teaching, professional achievement and growth, and service). [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

Faculty opinions in this area were expressed often and emphatically in the focus groups.

**Essay 2: Facing the Challenges of a Changing Faculty and Student Profile**

Historically, San Francisco State University has drawn its students from the local area and has largely served non-traditional students who were older, employed, and had family responsibilities. Recent data, however, indicate that this demographic profile is changing. Data collected through the NSSE and FSSE surveys over the past four years indicate dramatic changes in both the student body and the faculty. Because of these changes, the WASC Steering Committee determined that further in-depth study of the impact of these changes was needed. Essay 2 analyzes the changes in the student and faculty demographics and recent responses to those changes.

**Capacity Issue:** What is the story emerging from the data on student enrollment? [CFR: 4.2, 4.4, 4.5]
When student enrollment data for the past 10 years are displayed graphically, they paint a striking portrait of the changing demographics at San Francisco State.

**Enrollment**

The student population at San Francisco State has experienced a period of rapid growth and significant changes over the past 10 years. In Fall 2000, a total of 26,826 students were enrolled compared to 30,469 enrolled in Fall 2009. Hidden inside the substantial growth of 13.6% overall are even more dramatic changes in the composition of the student population:

- The incoming freshman population doubled from 2,042 to 4,032.
- The percentage of freshmen coming from outside the San Francisco Bay Area has more than tripled, increasing from 574 to 1,815.
- The student average age has changed from 26.2 to 24.5, while the average undergraduate age has dropped from 24.0 to 22.8.
- The graduate population has declined from being 24.1% of the student body to 17.9%.

**Ethnicity**

San Francisco State places a high value on its commitment to social justice and equity, as demonstrated in Essay 1. One measure for the embodiment of this value is the ethnic diversity of the enrolled student population and the students who graduate. As the student population has become younger and more likely to come from outside the Bay Area, the ethnic makeup of the students has been watched closely to determine if the campus retains its ethnic diversity. [CFR 1.5, 4.5] Comparing the ethnic data from Fall 2000 to Fall 2009, several trends are apparent:

- The undergraduate Chicano/Latino population has grown steadily from 15% to 20.3%.
- Asian/Pacific Islander undergraduates have declined from 39.5% to 32.8%.
- African American undergraduates have declined from 7.3% to 6.3%, although the number of African Americans enrolled has increased by 12.9%.
- The graduate populations have seen similar changes, except that Asian/Pacific Islander graduates have grown from 20.7% to 22.4%.

The best evidence of the continuing campus commitment to supporting a diverse student body is found in a comparison of the ethnic breakdown of undergraduates enrolled to the undergraduate degrees awarded. The ethnic breakdowns of the two groups are remarkably aligned, giving testament to San Francisco State’s ability to support the success of all students.

**Enrollments by College/Program**

Enrollments by college and major typically rise and fall over time. Review of undergraduate and graduate enrollments since Fall 2000 show the following trends:

- Growth by major for freshmen has been most notable in two colleges: Business and Health and Human Services.
- For new transfers, the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences showed the most dramatic increases in the first five years of the decade, but this has leveled off. The number of new transfers into the College of Health of Human Services has doubled in the past 10 years.
- Graduate enrollments have also fluctuated year to year, but the most significant changes have occurred in the College of Education, which has grown from 934 to 1,411 students (+51%), and the College of Business, which has declined from 759 to 416 (-45%) students.
The reasons behind these enrollment trends have provided ripe opportunities for thought and analysis. Looking forward, further consideration of the changes in the student population leads logically to the question:

**Capacity Issue:** How should the University respond to increasing student enrollment with uneven distribution across majors and class levels? [CFR: 2.10, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10]

As the undergraduate student population has grown, several academic departments have come under increasing pressure from students seeking access to classes, particularly in high-demand majors. As a result, faculty in more departments have sought designation as “impacted” majors, which is defined by the CSU as having more students who want to enroll in a particular major than can be accommodated by the faculty and class resources available to the department. As a part of the WASC CPR, an Impaction Committee was convened to study the need for impaction and the possible unintended consequences of allowing departments to impact. Impacted majors are allowed to impose higher supplemental criteria on students hoping to be admitted to the major, and as of Fall 2011 a total of 11 departments will have impaction status.

Four of these departments have long-term experience with impaction: Nursing, Social Work, Interior Design, and Apparel Design and Merchandising. These departments have found that they are much better able to regulate the flow of students through the majors and make courses available to the students when they need them. The majors have developed robust systems for faculty to review applicants based on supplemental materials and select the students with the best likelihood to succeed in the major.

Three additional majors were approved for impaction for the Fall 2010 admissions cycle: Psychology, Dietetics, and Journalism. As one of the largest undergraduate majors on campus, Psychology in particular presents challenges to the University and the department to limit the number of students enrolling. The department fell from 495 new students enrolled in Fall 2009 to only 160 new students in Fall 2010. Because students who are not selected for admission can choose to come to San Francisco State in an alternate major, some students not admitted to Psychology are expected to come in the second choice major, creating a ripple effect in the number of students in related majors, for example, Sociology. We have already seen this happening in the Fall 2010 enrollments. The other two newly impacted majors, Dietetics and Journalism, are smaller, but might have similar ripple effects as impaction becomes a reality for their applicants.

In Spring 2010, four more programs applied and were approved for impaction in Fall 2011: Child and Adolescent Development (CAD), Design and Industry, Environmental Studies, and Pre-Nursing. The CAD major serves a large number of students who want to work with children in various capacities. Pre-Nursing is a pre-major that allows students to work toward prerequisites required for admission to the Nursing major. Impaction for both CAD and Pre-Nursing is expected to have a similar noticeable impact on other campus departments as fewer students receive access to their first choice majors.

If more departments move to request impaction in response to enrollment pressures, the effect on the University as a whole will become increasingly apparent. To analyze the outcomes and identify possible unintended consequences of this situation, the Enrollment Management Committee has begun a serious review of the effect of increasing the number of impacted majors on the campus and its students. There is concern that increasing numbers of impacted majors might affect the rich diversity of the student body, possibly eroding the University’s mission of social justice and equity. Moreover, the question of the capacity of each major given the severe budget restrictions and shifting student demographics is an issue that must be addressed in the very near future. In response, the Provost has appointed a Capacity Task Force to identify the variables that determine capacity. Both of these issues will be addressed in the 2010-11 academic year. [CFR 1.5, 2.10, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10]
**Recommendation 9**: Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management, located in Student Affairs, should work together to develop methodologies for departments to analyze their optimal size given their current resources, and they should align their academic planning and budgeting within these analyses. [CFR 3.5]

All of these demographic and enrollment changes draw attention to whether the University has changed its focus and curricular offerings in response to the changes in the students. The next research question addressed in this theme follows this train of thought:

**Capacity Issue**: How has the campus focus changed in response to the student demographic changes?

With an increasingly younger and more residential population, the need for campus support services and co-curricular activities has grown significantly. Examination of enrollment data and recent NSSE results reveals that San Francisco State University, while maintaining some characteristics of its past as a “commuter” campus, has also become a student population that works less, commutes less, and is on campus for longer periods of the day and week. Campus support units must be aware of the demographic changes and respond as needed to serve the expanding student population.

**Student Affairs/Student Life**

To address the co-curricular needs of the changing student population, the Division of Student Affairs has been recently restructured to provide a greater focus on the needs of this new student population within Student Affairs. Under the guidance of an experienced Student Affairs professional, the Student Life area is expected to become a coordinated unit with the mission of attending to the developmental needs of the younger student population, while not neglecting the needs of SF State’s traditional older student populations. [CFR1.3, 2.10, 2.11, 3.8]

The Student Life area focuses on several goals:

- To improve retention and assist with facilitating graduation
- To provide and develop robust programs, support services, and events for students
- To establish policies and procedures to address safety and security concerns
- To be proactive in assessing student needs and providing appropriate services
- To connect faculty, staff and administrators with students through co-curricular programming

As part of this shift, the Division of Student Affairs has undertaken an intensive, year-long effort to bring assessment and student learning outcomes into the vocabulary of student affairs professionals and staff. [CFR 2.10, 2.11]

**Housing**: A coordinated response involving campus housing is critical to the efforts to accommodate this shift in the student population. San Francisco State has built and acquired several additional residential properties in the last decade as described in the Campus Master Plan:

- The Village at Centennial Square was built in 2001 housing 720 students.
- University Park South apartments were acquired in 2001 on the southern perimeter of the campus footprint, adding 156 bed-spaces.
- University Park North apartments were acquired in 2005 on the northern perimeter of the campus, adding 697 apartment units.

Although the properties are still transitioning to being fully occupied by students and other University-affiliated tenants, the inevitable result of having more housing options near campus is that students are much more likely to live on or near campus than in the past. The increased availability of housing near campus has reinforced the trend toward a younger, more residential population. In addition to the
fundamental change of acquiring additional housing units, University Housing has also recently undergone organizational changes:

- In June 2010, University Housing was renamed University Property Management and changed reporting lines from Enrollment Management in Student Affairs to Physical Planning and Development in Finance and Administration. This shift enables the University to take a comprehensive management approach to the growing complexity of the various properties under its control.
- At the same time, Residential Life was removed from reporting to University Housing and folded into the newly constituted Student Life area.
- A new, experienced Director of Residential Life was hired to oversee the integration of a Student Life philosophy into the fabric of daily life for students living in campus residential facilities.

With Residential Life now an integral part of the Student Life area, the University has greatly improved its capacity to create a coordinated, deliberate approach to student programming and development. [CFR 3.1, 3.5, 3.8]

Living/Learning Communities have been an active force in campus residence halls for several years. The primary objective of residential learning and theme housing at SF State is to provide an environment where students can explore the interconnected relationship between what is learned and what is lived. By offering these communities, the University has made a commitment to creating a holistic learning environment that provides peer networking opportunities, increased faculty support, and community-based learning inside and outside of the classroom. [CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13] Currently, the following learning communities are offered for first-time freshmen:

- FASTrack Learning Community – For undeclared students as they decide on a major
- Behavioral & Social Sciences (BSS) Learning Community – For students majoring in programs in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Science & Technology Theme Community – For students majoring in science, mathematics, and engineering fields
- LiFE Learning Community – For students majoring in programs in the College of Health and Human Services
- Humanities Learning Community, IDEA – For students majoring in the College of Humanities
- College of Creative Arts Theme Floor – For students who have declared a major in the College of Creative Arts
- Business Learning Community – For students majoring in or completing a minor in Business

Living/Learning Communities represent an important and active collaboration between Residential Life, and the academic colleges in the effort to assist new, young students in their transition to a successful University life.

**Activities/Organizations:** The unit in Student Affairs that coordinates student leadership and campus activities at SF State is called LEAD (Leadership, Engagement, Action, Development). LEAD supports SF State students, faculty, and staff by providing leadership development programs, student organization resources, and event coordination and consultation.

As part of the change in campus focus, driven by evolving student demographics, LEAD has become a more essential tool for assuring that students are served well as they grow and mature in their life at the University. LEAD has undertaken several initiatives in recent years in response to the demographic changes:

- A leadership program has been developed to provide training and networking opportunities for students.
Welcome Days, a two-day program, is offered the week before classes begin to greet new students and their families and introduce them to the campus and its services in an informal and engaging way.

Staff members responsible for student programming activities in the residence halls have been shifted from Housing to become part of the LEAD staff.

A comprehensive database (OrgSync) has been set up to allow student organizations to communicate with and keep track of their members.

Policies and processes for requesting use of campus facilities and space by organizations and individuals have been refined and are more widely disseminated.

A Leadership Learning Community has been established in Housing to allow incoming students to join like-minded peers who may want to become future student leaders.

These are just a few examples of the numerous initiatives that LEAD has undertaken to address the shift in the demographics and needs of students at SF State.

**Recreation:** The Campus Recreation Department is another student-focused unit that strives to meet the dynamic needs of students by providing programs and services that promote positive physical and mental health; encourage lifetime interest in active, healthy lifestyles; and provide student leadership opportunities that complement the academic experience. [CFR 2.13] Campus Recreation programs enable students, faculty, and staff to achieve a greater understanding of campus life through sport, aquatic, and wellness based activities.

To respond to a growing younger student population, Campus Recreation has expanded to the limit of the campus’s physical and fiscal boundaries. The program offers physical activities in a wide variety of formats, including group fitness, wellness programs, club sports, and intramural sports. The number of students participating in intramural sports has grown dramatically over the past 10 years from 405 students in Fall 2000 to 1,105 students in Fall 2009. Similarly, the number of recreation opportunities available to students has grown dramatically over the past 10 years from 2 clubs to 14 student-led teams that range from martial arts to rugby.

Looking to the future, the Campus Recreation program is partnering with the Associated Students (student government) and the Student Center to plan a new Recreation and Wellness Center to be funded by a small increase in local student fees. When the new Center is finished in 2014, it will provide both residential and commuter students with access to a state-of-the art facility where students can gather, exercise, socialize, and develop. In the Fall 2010 PULSE survey, 80.2% of students responding indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I would like to see more recreation activities on campus.” In response to another question, 73.9% agreed that they want more intramural sports activities on campus. A new Recreation and Wellness Center will go a long way to respond to this desire for more opportunities for recreational activities. The Master Plan envisions the opportunity to build additional sports and recreation playfields that will serve the recreational needs of a growing, more residential population.

**Campus Grounds:** Perhaps a surprising hallmark of a university set in an urban site is the well-kept lawns and lush urban forest at SF State. The Campus Master Plan describes a campus located in a larger green space network.

In the short term, less grand efforts have already been completed to connect the campus core with the recently acquired residential properties on the perimeter of the campus. Notably, a sloping footpath was built in 2009 that leads from the academic buildings and stadium up to the University Park North apartments, creating a visible and convenient pedestrian and bicycle link for students and University employees who live there.

The need for usable open space on campus remains strong. In satisfaction surveys, students often complain about wanting more space to study, play, and even sit. Despite the addition of the apartments on the north
and south of the core campus, SF State continues to have the smallest acreage of all 23 CSU campuses. The long-term Master Plan will address many of these needs and will focus on a greener, more sustainable campus environment.

**Counseling/Psychological Services:** With changing demographics comes a parallel change in students’ needs for counseling and psychological support services. [CFR2.13] The University understands that younger student populations living away from home for the first time have different needs than those of older, more mature students. The trained counselors in the Counseling and Psychological Services unit have observed new and increased demand for mental health and other support services among these younger students.

As one response, in Spring 2010 Counseling and Psychological Services assigned a counselor to set up a satellite office located within the residence halls and make himself available to both students and Residential Life staff in an effort to intervene proactively when mental health concerns arise. Coordination of psychological services with the new Director of Residential Life will be an important component in the overall effort to support new students in their adjustment to the academic and social demands of college life.

**Recommendation 10:** Student Affairs should continue to develop co-curricular offerings that enrich the SF State student experience. [CFR 2.11]

**Capacity Issue:** Are learning styles of the changing campus population different and is pedagogy changing to respond? [CFR 2.10, 4.7]

Equally important to the question of how the University is responding to changing student demographics in terms of co-curricular support is the question of how the University is responding to the changing learning styles of the new student population. [CFR 2.10] To explore this question, several data sets were employed:

- WASC Faculty survey, Fall 2009
- Faculty focus groups, Spring 2010
- WASC Student survey, Fall 2009
- PULSE survey, Spring 2009
- Student focus groups, Spring 2010

**Data Analysis**

In both the faculty and student surveys and focus groups, the responses uniformly pointed to newly developed technologies as the major sources of change in preferred learning modes. The recurring theme in the responses was the ubiquitous nature of technology in students’ lives and their expectations for the rapid interaction that technology provides. Faculty consistently identified the need to use technology to communicate effectively with the current generation of students, though several lamented a loss of attention span that they believe has been reinforced by the use of new technologies. In the December WASC survey, students identified iLearn (the SF State learning management system), podcasts, video conferencing, online exams, and email as the technologies they wanted their professors to use more frequently.

**Academic Technology**

Although the number of students who have taken a purely online class has increased three fold over the past seven years, there is still somewhat of a split in the preference for purely online classes, with 50.9% in favor of online delivery for classes that are hard to get, 31% preferring online over traditional delivery, and 22.5% saying that they do not prefer online courses. Nonetheless, 95% of SF State students are already very active in the university’s online learning management system, iLearn, and they use it for one or more
The Office of Academic Technology (AT), which supports and advances effective learning, teaching, scholarship, and community service with technology, has focused much research and activity towards this emerging area of need over the past three years. It has also developed a new mission and purpose, a new internal organizational structure that focuses more on faculty and student support, and an expanding suite of integrated and accessible online tools and services. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

Organizationally, universities have been called upon to provide enterprise-level academic technology systems and services that offer the required levels of performance, scalability, and reliability to support the evolving learning and teaching mission of the university in a cost-effective manner. We know that the new generations of learners and faculty expect integrated, innovative, and interoperable online tools to either complement, or fully enable, the delivery of their courses.

Following and often leading a national trend towards implementing customizable open-source learning technologies, AT develops, supports, and optimizes a suite of open-source software environments such as its Moodle-based iLearn. These tools provide similar functionality and usability to social networking and external media sites such as blogs, wikis, media, video, and other activities that students are accustomed to using in their daily lives. However, these SF State-hosted solutions are more secure, more accessible to people with disabilities, and more customizable to the learning and teaching context of the university. [CFR 3.2]

As a complement to iLearn, which often serves as the hub for integrations to relevant educational services, AT’s current suite of learning and teaching technologies includes CourseStream (Lecture capture), DIVA (Digital Virtual Archive), Online Syllabus Tool, POWER (Personal Online Workshop and Events Registration system), LabSpace (virtual access to campus computer lab desktops), FRESCA (Online Faculty Profiles), web conferencing, video conferencing, electronic textbooks, audiovisual equipment, and technology enhanced classrooms and lecture halls.

To further support learner-centered approaches, AT has been recognized by the AAC&U and the CSU as a Center of Excellence for Electronic Portfolios, which have been expanding from the ground up through faculty interest. ePortfolios are currently used in 22 departments for both student and program assessment, and for professional development. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

AT has been working closely with the faculty-led Educational Technology Advisory Committee, university senate committees, and university units to research, implement, promote, and evaluate innovations and best practices to support learner-centered uses of technology. AT has worked with the Senate Student Affairs Committee to research and develop an electronic implementation of online course evaluations, and with the Senate Strategic Issues Committee to develop an online education policy that identifies new course definitions ranging from Traditional, Technology-Enhanced, HyBrid, HyFlex, and Online, and establishes appropriate levels of support for students and faculty to ensure quality of education. [CFR 4.2, 4.6, 4.7]

**Assessment of Academic Technology**

Students are increasingly drawn to SF State’s HyFlex course offerings, which provide them the opportunity to attend classes face-to-face, online, or a mixture of the two. Enabled by lecture capture technologies, AT is building the infrastructure to target bottleneck courses with this HyFlex approach because it might help students accommodate their preferred learning styles, gain access to impacted courses, and improve their understanding through repeated viewings of lecture materials. AT will be launching a major study to investigate the educational effectiveness of HyFlex courses compared to Traditional lecture courses, and we will be gathering student and faculty input on their experiences with these new learning environments.
Strategic Planning of Academic Technology

AT has also launched its own Go Digital! Campaign and is encouraging faculty and students to work in a digital realm. AT is building a podcasting studio in collaboration with the College of Humanities, preparing podcasting kits for faculty checkout, and helping departments such as the Poetry Center digitize their university assets.

Faculty and students can receive technical help from AT by email, phone, drop-in, chat, and a growing database of online QuickGuides, videos, screencasts, and online professional development courses. In addition, AT has restructured its faculty development and support model to provide a team-based approach to curriculum development for faculty who are converting their courses into new technology-enabled approaches. A cohort of AT staff has recently completed Instructional Technologies graduate degrees to modernize their instructional design skills to better serve faculty. [CFR 3.4, 3.7, 4.7]

The new library, scheduled for January 2012 completion, will further support faculty and students in their technology use by providing three videoconferencing rooms, five enhanced instructional spaces, student and faculty drop-in multimedia development labs, video and audio editing suites, a television studio, a digitization center, and many technology-enhanced student project rooms.

In the next academic year, AT will be working with various planning groups on campus, and especially with students, to develop a purposeful, strategic plan for how emerging technologies can fit within a larger technology vision to enable 21st century learning, teaching, research, and community service. [CFR 4.2]

Recommendations

San Francisco State has experienced dramatic changes in the nature of its student population over the past 10 years. Despite the dual challenges of coping with increasing enrollment pressures and living with a reduced budget, the University has made significant attempts to respond to the demographic changes, both in terms of co-curricular activities and support services, and in terms of curricular innovations such as the increased use of technology in the classroom. Campus administrative and faculty leaders are largely aware of the demographic shifts and have demonstrated the capacity to adjust programs and resources to respond to these changes. Though many challenges remain, the organizational structures are in place to continue the efforts to mold the University to serve the new generation of students while continuing to serve the traditional audience it has educated for over one hundred years. As we move into the Educational Effectiveness Review, the following recommendations are offered:

Recommendation 11: The University should continue to incorporate academic technology into the academic program as appropriate and assess the impact of these pedagogical changes on student learning. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

The changes in faculty over the past 10 years have been just as dramatic as the changes in the student population. Over 50% of the faculty was hired in the last 10 years, and university data from 1998 and 2008 show a significant increase in the ranks of assistant professor, from 15% to nearly 34%. The ranks of assistant and associate have grown from 35% to 58% of the total of tenured and probationary faculty, while the ranks of professor have decreased during the same period from nearly 64% to just over 42%. The lack of hiring over the past several years will give the University a chance to reestablish more of a balance as the new faculty move through the tenure ranks and older faculty retire.

These changes led the WASC Steering Committee to pose the following question for the Capacity and Preparatory Review:

Capacity Issue: What is the impact of the significant faculty hiring at SF State as a previous generation of faculty has retired?
Data gathered to investigate this question include:

- Campus-wide faculty survey, Fall 2009
- ACE/Sloan Institutional Survey, 2008 (40% faculty response rate)
- Faculty focus groups, Spring 2010

Data Analysis

Data from the faculty focus groups proved to be most revealing regarding the impact of the changes. Complimenting what students noted in their surveys, faculty commented on students’ reliance on technology, and particularly their need for more visual reinforcement. Although we were unable to quantify the response to this change, many faculty stated that they had changed their own teaching pedagogies to address these student preferences. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5] Faculty also noted that while students might be more expert in the use of technology, such expertise has not necessarily improved their basic skills or preparation for university work. The wide range of student ability, the lack of preparation in basic subjects (writing, critical thinking, oral communication), and inadequate preparation for university work are still challenges for faculty in their teaching and advising, but they are changes that many faculty willingly embrace.

With regard to faculty demographics, many reported that having fewer faculty at the rank of professor has resulted in a smaller pool of individuals who participate in some areas of governance, from department promotions committees to university-wide committees. With the recent increased emphasis on research, many of the new faculty believe that governance and service take time away from their research agendas, which are more heavily weighted in retention and tenure review.

The newer faculty, in particular, pointed out the tension between the increased teaching and service expectations due to budget cuts and the greater emphasis on research and grants. Similarly, the mentoring of new faculty has occurred unevenly, and previous attempts to create a university-wide program have not met with success. In some cases, senior faculty who were not hired with heavy research expectations cannot adequately mentor faculty on moving through a research agenda, and new faculty who are focused on research may not see the value of the service and governance experience of the senior faculty. These conflicting values have created tension in some departments. Because of these issues, the Office of Faculty Affairs has played an increasingly important role among faculty, mentoring them in the development of their academic portfolios. [CFR 3.2, 3.4] In addition, the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects has also played a crucial role in assisting faculty in the development of research agendas and publications.

Of all the issues raised by faculty in open-ended questions on the survey, the one topic that took priority was the impact of the budget cuts. Faculty noted the consequences of these cuts on class size and on teaching, professional development, and service. Yet in spite of the challenges of under-prepared students, lack of funding, and shifting priorities in teaching and research, faculty remain committed to their students and inspired by their colleagues. They expressed a great desire for more opportunities to meet informally with colleagues, and faculty repeatedly lamented the absence of a restaurant or faculty lounge where such meetings could occur. [CFR 3.11]

Recommendations

** Recommendation 12:** Changes resulting from recent budget cuts have altered the workload of many faculty members. The role that each RTP area (i.e. teaching, professional achievement, and growth, and service) plays in the evaluation of faculty needs to be clarified and evaluated carefully in an era of scarce resources. [CFR 3.3]

** Recommendation 13:** The University should provide a comfortable place where faculty, staff and administration can meet socially. [CFR 3.4]
The theme of student success has led to research and reflection on a number of areas related to students. On the one hand, we examined graduation and retention rates, looking at this more holistic level of student success. However, we also examined this issue by looking at what students have learned at the programmatic level, in others words, student learning outcomes. In addition, we included two curricular efforts that have been in progress for a number of years that we believe will have a major impact on student learning: the Graduation Requirements Task Force (GRTF) Initiative and the Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Discipline Initiative (WAC/WID). Each of these four areas became topics of focus for the third theme of the WASC review.

**Capacity Issue: Are different populations of students succeeding at similar or different rates?**

The University began focusing attention on graduation and retention in 2005 within the context of a CSU system wide initiative. At that time the Facilitating Graduation Task Force (FGTF) was created and charged with making recommendations to improve undergraduate graduation rates. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.7] The recommendations from this group included improving the frequency and type of advising on campus; improving the quality and amount of communication with students; addressing curricular bottlenecks; and, overall, creating a “culture of graduation.” At the time of the FGTF review, the University did not have an office of Academic Institutional Research, and much of the data for a more granular analysis of graduation and retention were not available. Since then, we have developed this office within Academic Planning and Development, making a more careful and in-depth analysis possible for the WASC review. [CFR 4.5]

**Graduation, Retention and Time to Degree**

Although there are many ways to define and analyze success, the WASC Graduation and Retention Subcommittee chose to focus on the big picture by examining graduation and continuation rates and other data broken down by gender, ethnicity, Pell Grant status (to identify financial need), first-time freshmen vs. transfer students, remedial vs. college-ready students, and college/department of major.

In 2005 the overall six-year graduation rate at SF State was 43.3%. For non-under-represented minority students the rate was 46.2%, and for under-represented minorities it was 34.1%. One difficulty historically in terms of determining whether our students were successful was that time to degree (TTD) data have been reviewed and judged based on the four- to six-year graduation rates of full-time, first-time freshmen. The CSU has recently expanded its data collection to look at eight- and nine-year graduation rates; this shows that our students do indeed persist, and given enough time, most who persist beyond one year do graduate. There are still discrepancies along race and gender lines – for example, 75% of female transfers graduate within nine years while just 66% of male students do, and fewer numbers of African-American students are graduating than the rest of the population (61.5% graduate within nine years). In terms of first-time freshmen, within nine years, men and women graduate at almost equal rates, although far more women graduated in a shorter time. While we are about average on graduation rates in the CSU system, the entire system falls behind considerably when compared with other universities in our Carnegie category. Because of this disparity, the Chancellor’s Office has once again taken up the charge of improving graduation rates with a major new initiative, Facilitating Graduation 2 (FG2), which is a follow-on to the 2005-06 project. The purpose of the current initiative is to increase the six-year graduation rates of first time-full time freshmen and transfer students at SF State by 8% by 2015, and to decrease the gap between URM and non-URM students by 50% by 2015.

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6 As defined by the CSU Chancellor’s Office, under-represented minority students (URM) are African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos.
To respond to this initiative, in Fall 2009 the University created an FG2 Task Force, which developed a five-year plan for the initiative. The plan includes an extensive set of activities to be implemented over the next five years, and these activities will become a part of the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review. We are already beginning to see an increase in six-year graduation rates between the 2002 and 2003 cohorts, which had a 1.7% increase. This increase is likely related to the changes that were put in place during the first Facilitating Graduation Initiative. As we scale up our efforts in this area, continue to collect data, and target specific populations and high impact activities, we believe that the collective result will be a further increase in graduation. [CFR 2.2, 2.3, 2.4]

To begin this effort, we recently disaggregated the graduation rates by college and by department for both first-time-freshmen and transfer students, and further disaggregated the data by URM and non-URM students. We have distributed this information to faculty chairs, and departments are already beginning to compare their rates and set benchmarks. We also plan to implement a migration study over the next year to determine where students go when they change majors and at what point they change majors, particularly in departments where graduation rates are low. Although much works remains to be done, we believe that taken together, all of these activities will have an impact. [CFR 4.4, 4.6]

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the focus group discussions helped the subcommittee develop questions for future use in campus surveys that will lead to an understanding of what factors contribute to successful students. Some of our questions were inspired by a WASC ARC session attended by the subcommittee chair in April 2008 entitled “Achieving the Dream: Student Success through Evidence.” These questions were designed to explore student beliefs about their ability to complete their degree. They included institutional factors such as availability of classes and flexibility of course choices; personal factors such as support from family and friends; university community support such as faculty and other university personnel; and co-curricular activities such as community service, study abroad, independent study, athletics and student clubs. The new questions have been added to the undergraduate exit survey, and student responses will provide direction in focusing on things that matter with regard to student success. [CFR 4.5, 4.7]

Based on all of our analysis we can make four observations with regard to the overall/university-wide graduation rates over time:

1. Time to degree (TTD) for both freshmen and transfers improved between 2003-04 and 2008-09 for virtually all populations: Female/male; Pell Grant/Non-Pell Grant recipients; ethnicity; and regular/exceptional admission. Possible reasons for this change are that fewer FTF students are requiring remediation, SF State’s facilitating graduation efforts are making a difference, mandatory advising initiatives at specific points of students’ college careers are having an effect, and the high cost of living and increased fees give students incentives to take more units each semester.

2. Non-Pell Grant recipients on the whole graduate sooner than Pell Grant recipients. Possible reasons for this difference are that non-Pell Grant students presumably have more parental support and are able to attend full-time. In addition, some grant students may not feel the rush to graduate since they are receiving financial aid.

3. There were more than 1000 more graduates in 2008 than in 2003, despite increasing enrollments and decreasing budgets.

4. Once students begin a major, although time to degree might differ from one major to another, different populations are just as likely to persist and graduate in a particular major.

In general, many factors are leading to decreasing time to degree, and the budget crisis is certainly another important factor. Recent budget realities have forced us to review our priorities and put limits on what students are allowed to do because we can no longer be all things to all people. The positive side of this predicament is that it seems to have helped students focus more on making progress to degree. The negative side is reflected in some comments by some students in focus groups; some feel rushed to graduate and some feel that we are more concerned with increasing the numbers of graduates than with
their educational experience. We are clearly in a period of transition with regard to the amount of access that students have to higher education and the focus they need to exercise in making decisions. In response to the budget crisis, the University has implemented a set of enrollment and curriculum controls. Other colleges and universities have practiced some of the controls we have put into effect for many years:

- creating a maximum number of times a student can repeat or withdraw from a course
- requiring high unit seniors to make timely progress toward the degree
- only allowing double majors or minors if a student can complete all requirements within a reasonable number of units

Although commonplace elsewhere, these changes have affected how faculty and students alike view the educational experience. One positive outcome is that these changes have made us pay more attention to whether students are making progress toward a degree. Some students who might previously have fallen through the cracks are getting the assistance they need because we are forcing them to do so. Hopefully, this will increase the number of successful students. [CFR 2.12, 2.13, 2.14]

**Capacity Issue:** Are resources being deployed appropriately to ensure that different populations succeed at similar rates?

A great variety of resources exist for students at SF State, and many of these are aimed at specific populations of students. The Educational Opportunity Program is a program that is committed to increasing the academic excellence and retention of California’s historically underserved students (low income, first-generation college) through its academic support programs. Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded TRIO program, providing intensive academic advising, tutoring, workshops, and financial assistance to approximately 160 students during their first two years of college. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) provides resources, education, and direct services so that people with disabilities have a greater opportunity to succeed at SF State. DPRC serves students with mobility, hearing, visual, communication, psychological, systemic (HIV/AIDS, environmental illness, etc.), and learning disabilities. The Advising Center is a university service staffed by professional counselors, interns, and peer advisors committed to providing guidance and information to help undergraduate students enjoy a successful college experience. In addition, several colleges offer student resource centers to assist declared majors with academic issues (for example, BSS Student Resource Center, College of Business Student Services Center, CHHS Student Resource Center). The Advising Center houses programs for new students, which offer orientations for first-time freshmen and transfer students and their family members. Each year over 10,000 people participate in orientation. In addition, the Advising Center staff monitors and advises students needing remediation in order to improve retention.

The Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) and the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provide campus-wide tutoring services. Some departments and programs offer major- or course-specific tutoring.

As mentioned in Theme Two, we have made great strides as a campus to address the needs of the increasing numbers of younger, residential students. However, we need to remember that a large number of what we used to think of as “non-traditional” SF State students still attend; they live off campus and commute, have family and work obligations, and are perhaps part time and possibly older or re-entry students. We do not know whether we are serving the needs of these students. The nine-year continuation data now provided by the CSU and the disaggregated campus data may help us at least see whether they are graduating. [CFR 4.5]

As the work for Facilitating Graduation 2 and the WASC EER proceed, we will be assessing these areas and attempting to define where we can target changes that will make a difference. [CFR 2.1, 2.2, 2.3]

**Recommendation 14:** The University should continue the work of the Facilitating Graduation Initiative 2 as planned and as required by the CSU. [CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.7]
Student Success in Learning

Student Success must include not only how many students graduate and how quickly they graduate, but also what they learn along the way. Three areas of Theme 3 focused on what students learn: the Graduation Requirements Task Force (GRTF), Writing Across the Curriculum/In the Discipline (WAC/WID), and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment.

Graduation Requirements Task Force

The current general education program at San Francisco State University took effect in 1981. Since then there have been substantial changes in knowledge, curricula, and faculty, yet general education has remained the same. In Fall 2005 the SF State Academic Senate passed a policy (F05-237) initiating a reconsideration of all of the requirements for baccalaureate degrees. [CFR 3.11] This policy called for the establishment of a Graduation Requirements Task Force, a self-study of current programs (conducted in Spring 2006), and an external review of those programs (conducted in Fall 2006). [CFR 2.4, 2.7] Those reviewers concluded:

The current GEP has many problems which may be individually correctable but which in their totality may require rethinking of the entire program from the ground up…. Neither the program nor any of its parts has a clear and sufficiently extensive rationale for its purposes…. Thorough program revision requires first a clear and extensive statement of the purposes of general education that is readily available to both students and faculty members and couched in terms that guide teaching and learning…. More than anything else, SFSU needs a refreshed statement of educational purpose that includes both general education and the major as part of a unified whole that provides clear direction for the undergraduate program.

Following this report, the Task Force reviewed the self-study and the external report and agreed with the reviewers’ recommendation that the first step was to develop broad goals for the baccalaureate. In January 2007 at the SF State University Retreat, the Task Force held multiple meetings to invite campus input about the goals. Task force members also reviewed baccalaureate requirements at multiple universities identified as exemplary programs and studied documents from AAC&U, including College Learning for the New Global Century: A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP).

Capacity Issue: How should the University respond to the findings of the 2007 General Education review?

In March of 2008, the Academic Senate approved a one page educational goals statement that had been vetted on the GRTF website for response from the entire university community. [CFR 2.4, 2.5]

Throughout the spring of 2008, the Task Force brainstormed potential curricular structures for baccalaureate degrees that will be consistent with the new SF State Baccalaureate Learning Goals and will adhere to our own system GE requirements contained in Title V and the Chancellor’s Office Executive Order 1033 on General Education. The Task Force then drafted requirements for upper division general education and posted them for campus review.

During the fall of 2009, the Task Force completed the draft requirements for lower division general education and developed student learning outcomes for all areas, as well as a structure for implementing the new package. In addition, during the entire 2009-2010 AY, the University Academic Assessment Advisory Committee studied a variety of plans for assessing general education, and agreed on a course-embedded approach that was designed by the SF State College of Education for their NCATE review. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

During Spring 2010, the SF State Academic Senate reviewed and debated the entire GRTF Recommendations Report, and finally approved the report at the end of the spring semester. Hallmarks of
the revised GE package include double-counting units in GE and the major, an integrated nine units of upper division general education, and student learning outcomes that include campus educational priorities such as social justice, life-long learning, civic engagement, and environmental sustainability.

It is expected that recertification of courses will begin during AY 2010/2011, and implementation of the new program will begin Fall 2011 in time for the EER visit. The assessment cycle for the program is expected to go forward in AY 2012-13.

**Recommendation 15:** The University should finalize the new baccalaureate degree requirements and begin the certification of courses, implementation, and assessment of the program as soon as possible. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]

**Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Discipline (WAC/WID)**

Attention to the importance of writing at SF State began 17 years ago with the formation of the Committee on Written English Proficiency (CWEP), which was established to encourage and support broad and effective faculty participation in the teaching and assessment of student writing. [CFR 2.4, 2.7] Toward these ends, the committee sponsors a wide array of services and activities in support of curricula and programs that foster the teaching, learning, and assessment of written English. Over the years, CWEP has established criteria for placing students in English writing courses, standards for assessing whether or not they have accomplished the objectives for writing (i.e. the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirements (GWAR) at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and general assessment of the writing program. [CFR 2.4]

**Capacity Issue:** How should the University move forward to improve writing at both the undergraduate and graduate levels?

In 2006, after much research, evaluation, and discussion, CWEP recommended that the Junior Examination for Proficiency in English Test (JEPET) for the GWAR be replaced by a course requirement for writing in the discipline. Following this recommendation, a Writing Across the Curriculum and in the Discipline (WAC/WID) director was hired to establish and implement the program. Over the past two years, the WAC/WID director has worked tirelessly to educate faculty on the value of WAC/WID and to train them in the skills and resources needed to develop quality GWAR courses. The program is currently being phased in, with 60 GWAR courses now approved and being offered. The WAC/WID director is currently gathering data from surveys and focus groups, and is exploring faculty and student perceptions of the value and challenges of this program. Preliminary indirect assessment data indicate that students have difficulty transferring what they have learned in general education English classes to the skills they need to succeed in writing in the disciplines. These findings are consistent with other programmatic assessment findings about the transfer of knowledge from basic skills to advanced application. As we move forward into the EER, the WAC/WID director will examine data on direct learning by comparing student writing in non-GWAR courses with writing in disciplinary GWAR courses. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

**Recommendation 16:** The University should continue to gather data with regard to the effectiveness of the GWAR courses on student writing, and make adjustments to the WAC/WID program based on the data gathered. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

In addition to undergraduate writing, much attention has been dedicated to graduate writing. When the SF State program review guidelines were revised in the 6th cycle to focus on graduate education, those guidelines included specific writing requirements at the graduate level. Two levels of writing assessment are now required of all graduate programs. Level 1 assessment of graduate writing requires all departments to include an assessment of writing at the time of admissions for all students. Departments may use the GRE writing score, a TOEFL writing exam score, or a score on an assessment that has been developed by
the department. Level 2 graduate writing assessment requires that departments conduct an additional writing assessment during students’ graduate experience.

Since the 6th cycle of program review began in 2008, all departments that have been reviewed have successfully initiated the Level 1 graduate writing requirement. While all departments have also initiated the Level 2 requirement, many of them have been using the thesis for this measure. The SF State Graduate Council has been working with departments to develop earlier measures for Level 2 to insure that students who need writing development will receive assistance before they begin the culminating experience. Graduate departments have also been appealing to the WAC/WID director for assistance with graduate writing. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6] The director is working on the implementation of the undergraduate program, and will work with these departments after that. Once the program has been fully implemented, graduate level writing can be phased into the responsibilities of WAC/WID.

**Recommendation 17:** The University should consider requiring graduate departments to implement the Level 2 writing requirement before the culminating experience begins, and assess graduate writing at Level 2 across the campus. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment**

No WASC report would be complete without a thorough presentation and analysis of student learning outcomes. Three levels of the assessment of student learning exist at San Francisco State University: Institutional Assessment, Academic Program Assessment, and Student Affairs Assessment.

**Institutional Assessment**

The Office of Academic Institutional Research (AIR) largely carries out data gathering and analysis for institutional assessment. Five types of measures are ongoing and were used for the WASC CPR report:

- NSSE survey
- FSSE survey
- Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)
- SF State CUSP II strategic plan
- Degrees of Preparation survey

Links and analysis of these measures can be found in the references. The NSSE and FSSE surveys are conducted every two years, while administration of the CLA is required every year by the CSU Chancellor’s Office. The assessment of the CUSP II strategic plan was carried out over a period of years from 2007 until 2010 by committees appointed by Academic Affairs. The Degrees of Preparation survey was conducted in the fall of 2008. SF State was one of 12 university campuses invited to beta test this instrument. The SF State AIR analyzed the results of this survey against all other participating campuses. If the opportunity arises, we expect to participate in the survey again in the future. A great deal of institutional information can also be found on the SF State College Portrait website, which is updated annually. [CFR 2.6, 4.5, 4.6]

**Academic Program Assessment**

**Capacity Issue:** Does the current program level assessment process give us the appropriate information regarding student learning?

The assessment of academic programs has three strands:

- Program Review
- Scheduled assessment reports
General Education assessment

Program review at SF State is implemented in cycles. College by college, programs undergo the program review process. When all programs have completed their reviews, a new cycle begins and the program review policy is revised. The university is currently in its 6th cycle of review. As a result of recommendations from the 2001 WASC review, the 6th cycle of review is focusing on graduate programs. The program review process follows the common pattern of a self-study, followed by a visit from two external consultants, a faculty review committee (Academic Program Review Committee, APRC) that writes a final report, and a Concluding Action Memorandum that is signed by the Provost, the dean, and the department chair. [CFR 2.7] A compendium of all 6th cycle review materials, organized by department can be accessed in the references to this report.

Scheduled assessment reports are reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Development, who determines report timelines. Some departments submit reports on an annual basis. [CFR 2.7] Departments that have fully assessed all of their learning outcomes are encouraged to conduct mini-studies on a currently relevant learning issue and are given an appropriate timeline for completion. In the past five years, a number of faculty members have attended the WASC conference to learn about assessment, and several faculty have attended the WASC assessment academies. The Office of Academic Planning and Development regularly offers training sessions on how to write outcomes and construct rubrics.

Whether or not we are obtaining the appropriate information on student learning from program level assessment depends on the department and its attitude toward the assessment process. Most departments that have specialized accreditation are well informed with regard to their students’ learning and are making changes based on that knowledge. In addition, just as many departments without specialized accreditation have embraced the value of assessment and are also making changes. The results across the campus are interesting.

Most students are learning the content of their majors, and departments are generally satisfied with student learning in the major. The places where issues arise are in the use of basic skills in the discipline and the level of learning in prerequisite courses needed to move into the major. Writing continues to be an issue across the curricula, and we expect that over time the WAC/WID initiative, together with changes in our lower division composition program, will yield discernible improvement in the quality of student writing. In a variety of fields, the ability of students to analyze a problem or a situation often comes up in departmental assessment reports. A number of programs, notably Computer Science and the College of Business, have turned their attention to soft skills such as teamwork, self-directed responsibility for timeliness, and communication skills as major areas of focus. The focus on soft skills has come as a result of feedback from employers and alumni. [CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7]

Needless to say, there are still a few departments that are resistant to assessment, even when they are allowed to develop qualitative, constructivist approaches and methods. Departments that have demonstrated strong pushback on assessment typically have one of two characteristics. In some cases, departments are composed of sub-disciplines that differ to a large degree in their perspectives and values. In these cases, assessment is difficult because the faculty cannot agree on the skills and knowledge that they value, and so determining what to measure is the sticking point. Another impasse occurs in departments that have an individualistic culture. In these cases, it is difficult for the faculty to view the student experience from a programmatic level, which obviously is necessary for program assessment. We are still working with these departments and have made much progress in the past year due to the exigencies of the imminent WASC visit. The Educational Effectiveness summary grid and the most recent departmental assessment reports for all departments can be accessed on the Academic Planning and Development website.

General Education assessment is in the process of revision. As noted earlier in this essay, a new Baccalaureates Requirements package, which includes General Education, was passed by the Academic Senate in the spring of 2010, and implementation is slated to begin Fall 2012. A structure for implementing
and assessing the new General Education program was included in that document, along with specification of course expectations and student learning outcomes for each area of GE that are aligned with the Baccalaureate Learning Goals (pp. 4-46). [CFR 2.2] During the 2009-10 academic year, the University Academic Assessment Committee recommended a course-embedded assessment procedure that will allow faculty members to score students electronically on specific learning outcomes as they enter their course grades. The system will allow for this data to be aggregated in order to assess all GE areas as well as the Baccalaureate Learning Goals. [CFR 2.2, 2.4]

**Student Affairs Assessment**

*C**apacity Issue: *What processes need to be implemented in order to assess the impact of student services on student learning?*

The Division of Student Affairs at San Francisco State University launched its inaugural assessment program in April 2009. Prior to that date, units within Student Affairs focused primarily on individual program improvement efforts. In preparation for the WASC Capacity and Preparatory Review scheduled for March 2011, Student Affairs shifted the focus and began a deliberate effort to bring student learning outcomes to the forefront. The move from a student satisfaction/program improvement model to a student learning outcome-based model resulted in a report that describes the assessment plans that were developed and implemented within Student Affairs units during the 2009-10 academic year. [CFR 2.3]

To begin this effort, Student Affairs directors received a two-day training program conducted by Lori Varlota, Vice President for Student Affairs at California State University Sacramento. The training program helped Student Affairs directors understand the basics of assessment:

- Aligning the department mission with the missions of the Student Affairs Division and the University. In some cases, the departments needed to craft new mission statements.
- Identifying the two to three overarching planning goals to broadly frame their work during the upcoming years.
- Articulating at least three significant student learning outcome and/or program outcomes to achieve for students who participate in their programs or utilize their services.

Directors were asked to develop instruments and collect data to measure the student learning that occurred. As might be expected in an inaugural effort at identifying measurable outcomes, some instruments and assessment approaches proved to be more valuable than others. The second cycle of developing and measuring outcomes will be greatly improved based on the experience gained in 2009-10. The foundation for evidence-based decision-making and outcome-based assessment will be used to create more robust assessment plans for the next cycle in 2010-11.

The report details the assessment plans created by each unit in Student Affairs. Assessment plans for the following Student Affairs departments are included:

- Athletics
- Campus Recreation
- Career Center
- Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC)
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
- Enrollment Management
- Financial Aid
- Leadership, Engagement, Action, Development (LEAD)
- Registrar’s Office
- Student Health Services
In Spring 2010, an associate vice president of student affairs was charged with overseeing strategic planning and assessment for the division. This appointment and the process that has been set in place will provide the division with the capacity to continue to evaluate its work in terms of student learning.

**Student Academic Services Assessment**

Three offices within Undergraduate Studies currently provide advising and tutorial assistance to undergraduate students are the Advising Center, Learning Assistance Center (LAC), and Campus Academic Resource Program.

The Advising Center is a university service staffed by professional counselors, interns, and peer advisors committed to providing guidance and information to help undergraduate students enjoy a successful college experience. The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides skill-based tutoring across disciplines by students for students. Through collaboration with programs, departments, and the larger campus community, the LAC works to respond to the diverse needs of SF State students. The Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) is student run and offers full-service tutoring to all SF State students. CARP services include evening academic support programs, in-class outreach to advertise the CARP services, and workshops to develop student college success skills and to prepare students for a variety of campus exams.

These three academic service programs have conducted narrative reviews of their work for many years. Nonetheless, the Academic Services Managers were included in the two-day assessment training program conducted by Dr. Lori Varlotta. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies concluded that the training could provide the advisors and tutoring professionals with knowledge and skills that would lead to a more learning-centered evaluation of their services. Subsequent to that training, each program developed student learning outcomes and measures, and collected data. The first set of results provides baseline data for the programs. By the time of the EER, we should have data over several years, allowing for programmatic evaluation. Data on the 2009-2010 assessment of academic student services can be accessed in the references to this report.

**Recommendation 18:** Student Affairs and Academic Student Services should continue their newly developed assessment processes, making programmatic adjustments as indicated by the results. [CFR 2.3]

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**Section III: Conclusion**

The work we have done for this Capacity Review has given us an opportunity to examine what we do well, and to envision a future where we continue to serve our mission of Social Justice and Civic Engagement and improve our ability to serve a student body and faculty that have changed in dramatic ways in the past 10 years. In our efforts to facilitate graduation and retention rates and revise and implement programs that will improve the educational experiences of students, we recognize both our accomplishments and our challenges. During our Educational Effectiveness review, we look forward to implementing the recommendations from this Capacity Review to expand the ways that we can better meet the needs of our students and faculty.

We are ready to implement a number of processes and policies to augment the ways that we demonstrate our commitment to social justice and civic engagement. Recommendations one through eight highlight the
changes we will make in the institution, and the steps we will take to build capacity to support the campus mission and to strengthen and better recognize the work of faculty related to its mission.

SF State has a longstanding campus commitment to support a diverse student body and the success of all students. Despite the budget cuts and a student population that has undergone rapid growth and significant changes in the past 10 years, administration, faculty, staff and students have made accommodations to manage these changes. As we move into the Educational Effectiveness Review, we are developing strategies for departments to bring their academic planning and budgeting in line with the number of students they are able to matriculate, and we have already begun the task of incorporating academic technology that better meets the needs of both students and faculty [Recommendations 9, 10 & 11].

We will address the changes in faculty workload that have resulted from budget cuts, the increased population of newly-hired junior faculty, and the retirement of a great many senior faculty by not only examining how faculty are evaluated in the RTP areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, but also by finding ways to encourage junior faculty to take on service and governance activities. To this end, we will take steps to clarify how these activities can be accomplished in the face of scarce resources and the demands of teaching and scholarship [Recommendation 12, 13]. We will also provide a comfortable place where faculty can meet socially and make the kind of connections that were lost when the faculty club closed several years ago.

Many factors, including the budget crisis and the enrollment and curriculum controls recently established by the University, have led to a decreasing time to degree that has had both positive and negative outcomes. Because we have been paying more attention to how students progress to graduation, students who need assistance are getting it because we are forcing them to do so.

The Facilitating Graduation Task Force (FGTF) has already made a number of recommendations that will be implemented over the next five years and will become a part of the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review. In addition, the recommendations of the revised GE requirements developed by the Graduation Requirements Task Force and passed by the Academic Senate in Spring 2010 will be finalized, implemented and assessed as soon as possible, and the recommendations of the Writing Task Force will be addressed and assessed [Recommendations 14-17]. As this occurs, student learning outcomes will continue to be assessed at the institutional, academic program, and student affairs levels, and programmatic adjustments indicated by the results will be made [Recommendation 18].

These recommendations from the WASC Capacity and Preparatory Review subcommittees provide a roadmap for the activities and products of the SF State Educational Effectiveness Review.
Summary of CPR Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Campus decisions regarding budget cuts must go beyond financial considerations and examine the impact on the university mission. [CFR 3.5]

**Recommendation 2:** The University should adopt and communicate a common definition of social justice for the campus community. [CFR 1.1, 1.2]

**Recommendation 3:** Where appropriate, course syllabi should indicate how learning objectives align with the university mission. [CFR 2.3, 2.4]

**Recommendation 4:** The University should consider and determine whether to award academic credit to students for community-based learning. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]

**Recommendation 5:** A task force should be created to recommend ways to increase awareness of civic engagement opportunities for students. [CFR 1.2, 2.2]

**Recommendation 6:** The University would benefit from an ombudsperson or office specifically designed to handle discrimination-related issues. [CFR 1.2, 2.13]

**Recommendation 7:** The University should develop definitions and standards for recognizing accomplishments in the area of community engaged scholarship. [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

**Recommendation 8:** Departments should develop criteria in their RTP policies that allow for the recognition of work related to social justice and civic engagement within the three RTP categories (i.e. teaching, professional achievement and growth, and service). [CFR 2.8, 2.9]

**Recommendation 9:** Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management, located in Student Affairs, should work together to develop methodologies for departments to analyze their optimal size given their current resources, and they should align their academic planning and budgeting within these analyses. [CFR 3.5]

**Recommendation 10:** Student Affairs should continue to develop co-curricular offerings that enrich the SF State student experience. [CFR 2.11]

**Recommendation 11:** The University should continue to incorporate academic technology into the academic program as appropriate and assess the impact of these pedagogical changes on student learning. [CFR 3.6, 3.7]

**Recommendation 12:** Changes resulting from recent budget cuts have altered the workload of many faculty members. The role that each RTP area (i.e. teaching, professional achievement, and growth, and service) plays in the evaluation of faculty needs to be clarified and evaluated carefully in an era of scarce resources. [CFR 3.3]

**Recommendation 13:** The University should provide a comfortable place where faculty, staff and administration can meet socially. [CFR 3.4]

**Recommendation 14:** The University should continue the work of the Facilitating Graduation Initiative 2 as planned and as required by the CSU. [CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.7]

**Recommendation 15:** The University should finalize the new baccalaureate degree requirements and begin the certification of courses, implementation, and assessment of the program as soon as possible. [CFR 2.1, 2.2]
**Recommendation 16:** The University should continue to gather data with regard to the effectiveness of the GWAR courses on student writing, and make adjustments to the WAC/WID program based on the data gathered. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

**Recommendation 17:** The University should consider requiring graduate departments to implement the Level 2 writing requirement before the culminating experience begins, and assess graduate writing at Level 2 across the campus. [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6]

**Recommendation 18:** Student Affairs and Academic Student Services should continue their newly developed assessment processes, making programmatic adjustments as indicated by the results. [CFR 2.3]