

Assessment Report

Governance, Culture and Climate of California State University, Sacramento

Prepared by
Center for Collaborative Policy
April 2008

At the Request of
President Alexander Gonzalez and
Faculty Senate Executive Committee
California State University, Sacramento

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Table of Contents

| | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------|
| Part One | Introduction and Methodology | 1 |
| Part Two | Assessment Analysis | 5 |
| | External Factors | 6 |
| | Unity on Basic Values | 7 |
| | Understanding the Underlying Difficult Dynamics | 8 |
| | The Two Discourses | 8 |
| | The Cultural and Behavioral Context | 9 |
| | Need for Structures, Processes, Traditions | 13 |
| | Stress on the University's Greatest Asset – Its People | 15 |
| | Need for a Clear and Unified Vision for the University | 16 |
| | Conclusion | 17 |
| Part Three | Assessment Recommendations | 19 |
| | Introduction | 19 |
| | Proposed Goals and Outcomes | 19 |
| | Overview of Proposed Collaborative Process | 22 |
| | Recommendations | 26 |
| | Spring 2008 | 26 |
| | Fall 2008 | 31 |
| | Spring 2009 | 34 |
| | Concluding Note | 36 |
| Attachment A | | 37 |
| Figure 1 | | 39 |

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Part One

Introduction and Methodology

In September 2007, the President and Faculty Senate Executive Committee of California State University, Sacramento asked the Center for Collaborative Policy to prepare an assessment regarding campus governance, culture and climate. This request largely grew out of the administration – faculty tensions surrounding the issues leading up to the Spring 2007 faculty no-confidence vote of the President.

The Center for Collaborative Policy is a unit of the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies at California State University, Sacramento.¹

The Assessment has three main purposes:

- First, the assessment provides data to assist the President and Senate Faculty in deciding whether a collaborative process may be appropriate to address their concerns regarding governance, culture and climate.
- Second, the assessment provides information about the dynamics and discourses manifested on the campus that may be important to understand how the administration and faculty can move forward in a collaborative process.
- Finally, the assessment provides guidance to assist members of the campus community at Sacramento State in deciding on a collaborative strategy to pursue, if they wish, in addressing the challenging issues the University faces in 2008 and beyond.

The next section summarizes the methodology the Center used in carrying out the assessment process. Subsequent sections summarize the Center’s analysis of the assessment data and the recommendations offered by the Center in response to that analysis.

The Assessment Report is intended to provide information to the President and Senate Faculty that is helpful for them to decide on next steps. It is not intended to provide

¹ For a short description of the Center, please visit www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment. Refer to Appendix 1.

an independent evaluation of the several different perceptions of causes of problems, nor is it intended to provide management recommendations. The Center does not view the former as useful and believes the latter should evolve from a collaborative process involving the administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The Recommendations included in Part Three are intended to assist the campus community to jointly engage together to help create a future for California State University, Sacramento that most can embrace. Finally, the assessment is not an opinion poll. Although we took great care to interview persons with diverse perspectives, those interviewed were not selected as a random sample of administration and faculty members. Therefore, it is not meaningful to infer from the data that a quantified measure of the universe of campus faculty and administrators hold a particular perspective on any of the dynamics discussed. When we characterize the perspectives and comments made, please remember that it refers only to those we interviewed.

Methodology

The Center designed the assessment research in conjunction with the Administration and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.² The assessment sought information about the current context for governance, culture, and climate on the campus from four sources of data:

- Interviews of faculty members and administrators;
- Observation of campus meetings;
- Review of relevant University documents; and
- Review of the literature regarding governance issues and the related external and internal pressures of other public institutions of higher education in the United States.

The methodology relied on a triangulation process in which data from the interviews was validated by data from observations and/or document review. In order for a significant factor or dynamic to be targeted for further attention, it had to be confirmed by at least two sources of data specific to Sacramento State. Information from the literature review was used to help place the data from the campus assessment in the context of national trends based upon the experiences of other institutions of higher education.

Based upon both the Center's best practices for assessments and the suggestions of the Administration and Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the Center identified 59 individuals to interview.³ These individuals were selected to represent a cross-section of perspectives and backgrounds

² For the September 2007 Description of the Assessment, see www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment. Refer to Appendix 2

³ For a list of interviewees please visit: www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment. One person requested that their name not be listed. Refer to Appendix 3.

represented in the administration and faculty, while keeping the interviews to a manageable number. The factors included for selection included ethnic identification, rank, part time and full time, known support for and opposition to the no confidence vote and / or recent University policies, college affiliation, age, gender, and relative engagement in campus governance activities. In addition, each interviewee was asked if there was anyone else who should be interviewed. This resulted in two individuals being added to the initial list.⁴

An interview protocol (questionnaire) was developed and reviewed by the Administration and Faculty Senate Executive Committee.⁵ Each person was interviewed by a professional from the Center for approximately 90 - 120 minutes during September, October, November and December 2007. Those interviewed were promised confidentiality as to the content of their responses. No one but the professional neutral analysts of the Center had access to the interview notes.

The data from these interviews were compiled into written notes that were reviewed by two professional analysts from the Center. Based upon these notes, the analysts tentatively identified significant factors and dynamics based upon trends and patterns related to campus governance, culture, and climate. These trends and dynamics were charted in a matrix. Both analysts then reread the interview notes together to code them relative to the factors and dynamics. Both analysts had to agree before an individual interview was coded for one of the factors or dynamics. In the course of this process, new factors were identified and included for coding. This process continued until all of the interviews had been coded, and the resulting factors and dynamics charted.

One Center analyst observed meetings of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Department Chairs, President's Cabinet, and other administration meetings throughout Fall 2007. In total, 21 meetings were observed. The data from these observations was used to help suggest factors for the assessment and to validate data from the interviews and review of University documents.

The two analysts reviewed hundreds of pages of documents from the Administration, Faculty Senate, and CSU System related to campus

⁴ The Center initially planned to include students and staff in the assessment interviews. However, the work involved with conducting and analyzing the data from the interviews did not leave us with the resources to do the student and staff assessment. In addition, several interviewees suggested we include alumni in the assessment. If the University decides to proceed with a collaborative process, we intend to follow through with interviews of students, staff, and alumni to provide information for the collaborative process.

⁵ For a copy of the interview protocol please visit www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment. Refer to Appendix 4.

governance, culture, and climate. Data from this review was used to compare and validate data from observations and interviews.⁶

Finally, the Center carried out a literature review of factors and dynamics related to higher education governance, climate, and culture in the United States. This review focused on the factors most relevant to Sacramento State. Early drafts of the literature review were evaluated by the two analysts for factors identified from data from the campus, and this input helped focus subsequent drafts of the literature review.⁷

The Center used the above data to develop an analysis of the situation on the campus and to develop recommendations for a collaborative strategy that members of the campus community could use to productively work together to enhance campus governance, culture, and climate.

In order to assess whether a collaborative strategy is feasible, the Center compared the conditions presented by the analysis with the best practice conditions needed to initiate a collaborative process. This is further discussed in the Conclusion of the Assessment Analysis (Part Two). These initiating conditions include:

- 1 The key parties are willing to participate and have the authority to collaborate.
- 2 There is the potential for mutual gains in the issues
- 3 There is no other arena in which the parties are likely to obtain a better solution independently.
- 4 There is evidence of mutual understanding regarding the issues.
- 5 There is a reasonable balance of the power among the parties.
- 6 The parties anticipate working with each other in the future.
- 7 There are external pressures to address the issues.
- 8 Time and resources are available for a collaborative process.

In January 2008, the Center's analysis and preliminary recommendations were then discussed with leaders in the Administration and Faculty Senate Executive Committee to assess whether these recommendations were feasible and resonant. Based upon input from those meetings, the analysis and recommendations were revised to incorporate new information, but not changed in their major import. Each person interviewed also was sent a final draft of the Assessment and invited to offer facts germane to the data, analysis and recommendations. The responses from all of these sources were considered before the final report was prepared. However, the Center is solely responsible for the contents of the Final Assessment Report.

⁶ For a list of these documents please visit www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment. Refer to Appendix 5.

⁷ To view the literature review visit www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment. Refer to Appendix 6.

Part Two

Assessment Analysis

Based on the data collected, the Center developed [Figure 1](#) to present a visual summary of the primary factors and dynamics influencing campus governance, culture, and climate.

The top portion of [Figure 1](#) (buff color) illustrates the national trends that are impacting Sacramento State as well as other public institutions of higher education across the country, while the remaining portions of the Figure (green) address the factors relating specifically to our campus. The middle portion of the Figure illustrates the campus dynamics and discourses that we found from our research. The bottom portion illustrates the impacts these national trends and local dynamics are having on members of the Sacramento State campus community.

[Figure 1](#) is a representation of a complex system where intense external pressures, differing and strongly-held perspectives on substantive issues, administrative and faculty cultures, individuals' behavior, and interpersonal relationships create the challenges that Sacramento State faces. Since the campus is fairly limited as to influencing the external factors illustrated in the buff colors, it makes all the more important to understand and take action on the factors we do control (green).

The Center's analysis, including [Figure 1](#), is a snap-shot in time of campus dynamics and factors as expressed from September through December 2007. Subsequent to the completion of most of the interviews, several activities and actions have occurred on campus, including the unanimous adoption of the University Strategic Plan by the Faculty Senate, the continued work of the University Budget Advisory Committee, and the March 18, 2008 Sacramento State campus forum where students, the President, the Faculty Senate, campus staff, all campus unions, and the Alumni Association working in coalition announced the formation of the *Alliance for the CSU* to stop the cuts to the budget of the California State University system. In informal conversations, faculty leaders and administrators alike have expressed that these activities are positive signs of improvement for the campus and the relationships between the administration and faculty.

External Factors Greatly Influence What Happens on Our Campus

Many of the national trends shaping the context for University governance, culture, and climate appear from the literature to be trends of a national import.

On a national basis, public financing for higher education is declining as universities compete with other societal needs for resources amidst the public's hesitancy for taxing themselves and growing government budget deficits linked to economic conditions. Unlike in decades past, public universities cannot predict their budgets from year to year due to the volatility of state and federal decisions, creating an unstable environment for near, mid as well as long-range planning. Public sentiment may be changing from the traditional view of higher education as a public good that benefits society (and that society should pay for) to a private good that benefits the individual (and that the individual should pay for). Arising from these factors, University Presidents are under increased pressure to dedicate much of their time to external fundraising and other entrepreneurial activities.

National, global and in-state competition for students is becoming fierce, exacerbated by the changing demographics of student populations. Demographers tell us that there will be fewer college-age young adults in the future. Yet the students who will seek a higher education will be increasing more diverse, requiring increased institutional cultural competence on the part of universities.

Public and governmental sentiments have created increased pressure for more accountability to external stakeholders and for more of a managerial organization of university governance. As a result, administrators seek to include more external stakeholders (such as alumni, business, parents, the media, and public officials) in university governance processes.

Nationally, faculty salaries have stagnated. Over the last 20 years, faculty salaries rose only 0.25% after inflation.⁸ Average faculty salaries actually declined for two years between 2003 and 2005 when adjusted for inflation, and then outpaced inflation by 1.3% in 2006.⁹ The CSU system has taken successive budget cuts over the past decade, which in turn have sparked conflict between administrators and faculty over compensation.

⁸ Wilson, Robin. 2007. For love, not money. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 14, 2007.

⁹ Millman, Sierra. 2007. For the first time in 3 years, faculty salaries beat inflation. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 20, 2007.

Research indicates a trend of junior faculty around the nation being less satisfied with their employment situations than their more senior colleagues. Rising expectations for tenure and promotion leave less time for faculty to effectively participate in university governance.

K – 12 education systems are struggling everywhere to graduate students with college preparation. The unprepared student places considerable stresses on those public higher educational systems that place a high priority on providing access to college for all those who desire it.

These trends affecting public higher education create pressure for internal change. As two scholars have argued “...changes in the external environment of colleges and universities require that internal governance adapt and become more responsive.”¹⁰

In this broader context, there are many different and often competing perspectives articulated for undergraduate education in public universities. These are listed in [Attachment A](#), which we drew from literature review mentioned in the methodology section. Notably, we found almost all of these national perspectives and tensions expressed in the data from our interviews.

As shown in [Figure 1](#), the broader influences and trends in higher education impact both the scarcity of resources and contribute to tensions on our campus around the future of higher education. The convergence between these national trends and what the campus data suggested led us to also investigate possible examples of attempts to address the related issues from other universities that might provide lessons for our University. These are also summarized in the literature review cited above and contributed to our Recommendations provided in Part Three.

Sacramento State Has a Unity on Basic Values and Perspectives That Will Help Move the University Forward

The interviews provided data to support two key findings regarding shared values and understandings of challenges as shown in [Figure 1](#). First, virtually everyone expressed a deeply held shared value of working to achieve student success. Second, virtually everyone expressed a shared understanding that scarcity of resources was a central factor influencing the recent concerns regarding governance, culture, and climate. Furthermore, most expressed the critical importance of a cooperative administration – faculty working relationship to manage the looming state budget cuts facing the University. These findings are very important for moving forward with a collaborative

¹⁰ Kenneth P. Mortimer and Colleen O’Brien Sathre, *The Art and Politics of Academic Governance* (2007). Praeger Publishers: Westport, CT, p.2.

strategy because it indicates an underlying consensus both on the most important value of the University and one of the most important challenges to advancing that value.

There were several other perspectives, not illustrated on [Figure 1](#), that were shared by almost all administrators and faculty alike. These include the perspective that a mutual agreement on governance and consultation among the President and his administration and the Faculty Senate and faculty would go a long way to addressing many of the tension expressed. Many interviewees called for a clarification of the roles among the President, Provost, Faculty Senate, other key administrator including Deans, and academic departments. Lastly, almost all interviewed expressed a need for more unity of purpose in pursuing a common vision for the University and a longing for a cohesive and friendlier campus community.

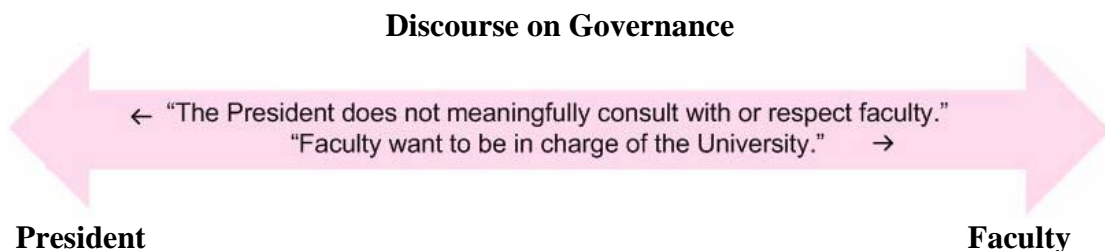
Understanding the Underlying Difficult Dynamics

Our representation of the central dynamics on our campus is shown in the middle portion of [Figure 1](#). Similar to any system, these dynamics can be self-reinforcing and can trigger additional reactions. With a deeper understanding of what keeps these dynamics in motion and an organizational will to change, the University can set a more productive course that will benefit students, faculty, administrations and staff.

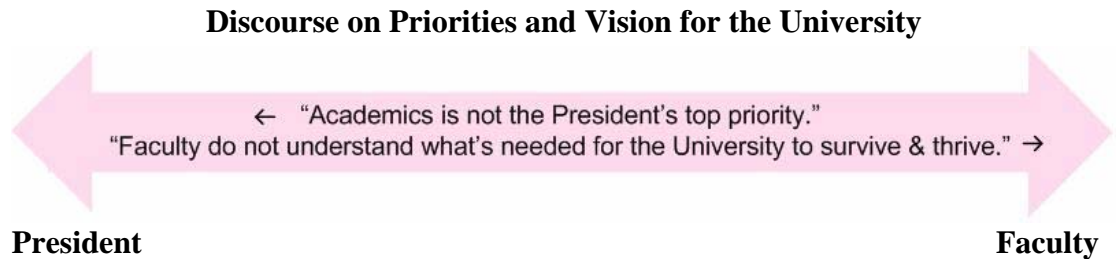
The First Factor: The Two Discourses

The pink arrows in [Figure 1](#) represent the two “meta-discourses” that have dominated the interactions between and among the administration and many faculty. These discourses are at the heart of the faculty-administration controversies.

The top pink arrow on [Figure 1](#) deals with the differing perspectives on **University governance**. The discourse takes the following form:



The other discourse refers to strongly-held perspectives on the **nature, mission and vision of the University**. This discourse takes the following form:



We found that many of those interviewed articulated fragments of the above discourses, but did not connect them to an overall understanding of the larger issues of governance, priority-setting, or vision for the University.

Our research found that disagreements on governance and the mission of a university are typical within many universities. Some universities use these tensions to improve how their university operates and make adaptation to their mission and vision to achieve better results. Many other universities manage significant tensions in a way that promotes resolution over time, even in situations of “perfect storms” linked to grave budget problems as many interviewers characterized the events of the 2006 – 2007 Academic Year. The question, then, is: Why are our discourses so unproductive and why did our dynamics lead to the conflicts that dominated the 2006-2007 academic year? That leads us to the second factor in the dynamic.

**The Second Factor: The Cultural and Behavioral Context
Surrounding the Discourses on Governance
and the Vision for the University**

The two discourses described above do not occur in a vacuum. Our research found that the administration and faculty experiences and interpretations of each other’s behavior and cultural norms polarized their discourse and set up chain reactions that interfered with their ability to reconcile differences.

On [Figure 1](#), the perceived cultural and behavioral context is represented by the two green circles to the left and right of the pink arrows. The one to the left symbolizes the President and the one to the

left symbolizes most of the Faculty Senate and an unknown number of faculty-at-large.¹¹

Perceptions regarding the President: Many, but not all, of the faculty members interviewed expressed concern that the President demonstrates an overly directive and top down approach to management. In their view, the President makes decisions with little input from or consultation with the faculty and is not receptive to receiving criticism about those decisions. Examples that were pointed to consistently included the way the salary inversion issue was handled, the way the roll out of Destination 2010 occurred, the process surrounding the 2006 - 2007 structural deficit, and the process for selecting the name of the University. While supporting better and more frequent communications from the administration, a number of faculty expressed that the President confuses information sharing and announcements with meaningful consultation with the faculty. Contrary to providing support for faculty involvement, there was a wide-spread perception expressed that disagreeing with the President could result in adverse personal or professional consequences, leading to reluctance to be engaged with decisions and/or a lack of trust in the President.

Additionally, many faculty members also expressed concern with how the President relates to both faculty members and administrators on a day-to-day basis. These faculty members commented about interactions they either observed or had with the President that led them to experience his relational style as cool, detached, dismissive, disrespectful, and blaming.¹² While acknowledging these perceptions, a number of faculty members expressed that the key administrators around the President need to “step up and be much less timid” about talking to the President about these perceptions. They often added that “the President does not get good advice.”

¹¹ Many administrators perceive that CFA was a key factor in the Spring 2007 vote of no-confidence. Many faculty members, including faculty who opposed the vote, expressed that the Spring 2007 vote would have occurred with or without CFA. Since there was no emerging consensus on this subject, we purposely did not include the campus unit of the California Faculty Association (CFA) as part of Figure 1. While being quite grateful for the role of CFA in obtaining a favorable salary agreement, most faculty expressed the view that CFA should not be involved in university governance. A number of faculty expressed concerns with what they described as CFA’s tactics.

¹² A few faculty members had a very different perspective, describing the President as warm, engaged, and supportive. These faculty members were puzzled by what they heard from their colleagues to the contrary. This was not the President they had experienced. We also were told by some faculty members that they recently have had interaction experiences with the President not consistent with their previous experiences. They were able to see a more engaging President than they had previously experienced.

The overlapping circles on [Figure 1](#) illustrate that the faculty is not a homogeneous group. Many, but certainly not all, faculty engaging in broadly-defined campus governance activities were quite concerned with the management approach and relational style of the President as discussed above. However, we also found, in general, that faculty who were less engaged in governance issues experienced these issues differently. Although they understood the criticisms of their fellow faculty and may have even agreed with them, they were less concerned with who governs the University or the approach taken by the President and more concerned with the creation of a stable campus environment. Those less engaged were also more optimistic that the University as a whole could make the changes needed.

Perceptions regarding the Faculty Senate: Faculty members, including many Faculty Senators and administrators we interviewed, expressed concern about the Faculty Senate as an effective and deliberative decision-making body. A number of faculty members experience the Faculty Senate as being bogged down by minutiae, overly prone to engaging in parliamentary maneuvers that often frustrate substantive dialogue, unprepared to address important issues, tardy in making decisions, and unsafe for the free expression of opinions opposed by some Senate members perceived to be powerful. A number of administrators expressed significant discomfort with how they perceive they have been treated at Faculty Senate meetings.

These perspectives regarding the Faculty Senate were also mirrored in documents we reviewed; in particular a survey from 1998 that indicated similar concern with the way the process of the Faculty Senate on our campus may frustrate its effectiveness as a deliberative body. After this survey was completed, Faculty Senate procedural reforms were implemented. A later survey suggested these reforms had improved functioning of the Faculty Senate.¹³ The data from our interviews suggested, however, that the same concerns expressed before these reforms are again being experienced by many faculty members.

A number of faculty questioned the leadership provided by past Faculty Senate Executive Committees, commenting that Executive Committees need to do their part in assisting the Senate to become a more effective body. Others mentioned that Executive Committees are not as engaged as they need to be.

¹³ See “Two Types of Procedural Dissatisfaction with Institutions: Lessons from Faculty Senate Reform”, by Edward L. Lascher, Jr., *PS: Political Science and Politics*, December 2000, pp. 853-856.

Also, a number of administrators and faculty offered criticism of the Faculty Senate and other faculty as having an “anti-administration” bias and stated that this dynamic started long before the President joined Sacramento State. (On the other hand, a number of different faculty stated that the President and his administration came to the University with “anti-faculty” bias.) Some administrators expressed a wish that they could be seen as individuals by faculty members rather than “faceless administrators.”

A number of faculty discussed the general lack of faculty interest in the University’s governance as potentially related to the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate. Other interviewees explained that most faculty everywhere are attracted to scholarly work in large part due to its emphasis on individual pursuit and the opportunity to master a discipline with its professional autonomy and academic community. They offered that the isolation and specialized work inherent in academic work draws individuals to the academy who often do not wish to do the more collective work associated with university governance; some suggested that the tendency toward isolation spills over into how Colleges within the University relate to one another. Some interviewees also suggested that the reward system for advancement within the academy is not necessarily consistent with time spent on contributions to the University. The energy and time spent on active participation, for example with the Faculty Senate, may therefore be a low priority. The national literature suggests that faculty members may not only be reluctant to undertake participation in governance, they may be suspicious of those who do. Additionally, some interviewees believe that because faculty are trained to engage in critical thinking, they more naturally see flaws in situations and that this may be an obstacle to being collaborative.

The Center observed that some of the academic departments consistently have a difficult time identifying faculty to serve on the Senate. Additionally, we observed that the Faculty Senate has challenges in recruiting faculty to hold positions of responsibility. Some faculty stated that they want the Faculty Senate to be more active in developing faculty leaders.

These cultural perceptions, behaviors and discourses are self-reinforcing. Both the President and his supporters on the one hand, and many other faculty members on the other hand, tend to interpret each interaction and react, based upon the discourse, without exploring any alternative understanding of the meaning of their interactions. The perceptions and discourses are also self-sealing in the sense that they prevent inquiry into the assumptions being made by one side about the

motives of the other side, and the testing of those assumptions by looking at the evidence regarding those assumptions.

The following example may illustrate the importance of exploring alternative understanding of the meaning of interactions. Many faculty members expressed the belief that a participatory or generative approach to leadership was more appropriate for an academic institution addressing the complex challenges that Sacramento State faces. The President, however, does not view his leadership approach as being directive, instead viewing his approach as empowering those who work for him to provide leadership and providing his support for their initiatives. This difference in perspectives could offer an opportunity for future collaboration because it suggests not a fundamental difference in the preferred leadership approach, but rather a difference in how leadership is being experienced.

The good news is that organizations locked in a similar dynamic have dramatically altered they way they do business by developing an institutional and interpersonal culture supportive of suspending judgment until assumptions can be discussed and tested, and understandings can be developed. Many of the Recommendations in Part Three focus on building this kind of an organizational culture for the University.

The Third Factor: Need for University Structures, Processes and Traditions to Reconcile Differences

Adding to the dynamics, we found that there are few processes or structures within the University to reconcile differences once they develop. This is represented on [Figure 1](#) as directly flowing out of the first two factors discussed above. Related to this, many interviewees expressed that Sacramento State does not have a tradition of “civil discourse” between administrators and faculty and wished that parties could, as one interviewee stated, “disagree with one another without disabling the campus community.” A number of interviewees stated that they wanted a culture in the University that encourages “standing up to poor behavior no matter where it comes from.” One interviewee made the poignant observation concerning the University’s traditions: “We are not and have not been a forgiving body.”

Some interviewed -- both administrators and faculty -- wanted the campus to have an Academic Senate rather than Faculty Senate so that there could be a place where administrator and faculty could work out their issues. Others talked about the need for a clearer and more

expansive role for Colleges and Departments in the governance of the University.

Additionally, a widely shared perception is that neither the Administration nor Faculty understands each other's organizational culture and traditions, which leads to a lack of trust and inability to communicate effectively with each other.

Many large organizations, with numerous issues, pressures and personalities at play, often slip into difficult dynamics. But if organizations have methods of adaptation and self-correction built into their culture, the dynamics can be successfully managed without being hardened. In our literature review, universities had various ways -- both formal and informal -- of providing these adaptive, self-correcting systems. For example, one university we read about had a tradition of good lines of communication between a few well-respected senior faculty members and the President. In that situation, when stresses started to interfere with the workings of the institution, these individuals informally came together to suggest a path to the issue at hand that both administrators and faculty could then discuss and resolve. In other universities, the administration and faculty have developed governance arrangements that provide formal mechanisms to identify, deliberate and resolve differences. This is not to say that the administration and faculty of these universities do not have serious disagreements, but rather that most on those campuses place confidence in their governance and consultation structures so that, at the end of the day, even those opposing a certain presidential decision still believe that the process was fair and that their views were seriously considered.

The following is our analysis of one Sacramento State conflict and how structures can be helpful to change the patterns of unproductive discourses. In the Spring of 2007, the issue of University budget priorities created significant conflict and appeared to play an important role in the no-confidence vote. Many faculty members interpreted and reacted to the President's approach to the budget in the light of their strongly-held views regarding governance and priorities. The President likewise interpreted and reacted to the faculty opposition in the light of his strongly held views on governance and priorities. These discourses left no space for the President and faculty to collaboratively confer about either the assumptions they were making about the motives of the others or the challenges and opportunities presented by the fiscal choices. This collaborative space was subsequently created by the creation of the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC). Administrators and most faculty members see the creation and process of UBAC as being a positive

change that moved beyond the prevailing discourses to address the budget issues by jointly exploring the evidence related to these issues. Similarly many faculty members cited the University's Strategic Planning Council as a positive change in the interaction between the faculty and administration that appeared to transcend the discourses.

UBAC and the Strategic Planning Council have been exceptions to the otherwise lack of processes and structures to reconcile the differences and tensions generated from the interactions between the President his administration, and the Faculty Senate and the faculty-at-large. But these do not have to be the exceptions. Having processes and structures that enable deliberation about underlying interests, joint inquiry into the evidence that is relevant to the issue and a collaborative process to craft decisions in a timely manner are helpful in transcending the tendency to cast an issue into an unproductive "us versus them" mold.

With regard to developing structures and traditions supportive of collaboration, one faculty interviewee summarized their perspective: "There needs to be a visible group of individuals within the Faculty Senate and Administration that can serve as a bridge between the larger faculty and administration, model the changes we want to see, and give voice to the hope of a cultural transformation."

Dynamics Place Stress on the University's Greatest Asset – Its People

As represented toward the bottom of [Figure 1](#), the assessment also found very high stress levels for both administrators and faculty members growing out of the above dynamics and intensified by the scarcity of resources. Administrators were distressed by the conflicts with faculty, the stress on faculty members, and the overall atmosphere of low morale and distrust. Many faculty cited this same atmosphere as producing stress for them and also expressed that they were worn out and discouraged by the impact the conflicts have on their ability to enjoy their work. Faculty and administrators alike worried that this atmosphere would be very difficult to change.

Faculty members were distressed by the large work load that makes it difficult to meet their teaching, scholarship, service, and family obligations. Many feared that student success could be compromised. Some younger faculty members are concerned that they carry a disproportionate load of work to the benefit of more senior faculty members and do not feel that they receive enough professional support or mentoring from their more experienced faculty or the larger University. Others expressed unclear expectations and accompanying anxiety about faculty Retention, Tenure and Promotion (RTP) processes. Still other faculty felt that their contributions to the University

were not valued, and that their career future was beyond their control, especially with scarce resources available to support professional career development in their fields. Some of the African American faculty members expressed that the campus and administration are not sensitive to the needs of African American faculty, staff and students, especially male students. Many had little hope that these above situations would change, even while they were willing to support an effort for change.

We believe this complicated interplay of all the variables at play in [Figure 1](#) is at the root of the climate of low morale, mistrust, anger, lack of hope, apathy, and “us versus them” attitude that surfaced in most of the interviews with both faculty and administrators.

Need for a Clear and Unified Vision for the University

As illustrated in [Figure 1](#), we believe the combined and interacting effect of the above dynamics has interfered with the development of a clear vision for the future of Sacramento State that most can embrace. Without clarity and unity of vision, it is very difficult to establish priorities that can be supported or implemented.

[Attachment A](#) lists tension point within universities across the nation largely created or intensified by external socio-economic forces. As mentioned previously, we found that very similar tensions exist on our campus. These are the kinds of issues that would need to be addressed as part of developing a shared and implementable vision, with accompanying priorities, for the future of the University.

There was no convergence among interviewees regarding which of the perspectives listed in [Attachment A](#) were most important for Sacramento State or which represented the primary dynamics on the campus. Many interviewees expressed versions of more than one of these perspectives. For example, while several talked about the tension between the need for basic educational infrastructure to support academic programs compared to highly visible capital improvements that might generate enrollment or donor interest, others talked about the tension between attracting students prepared for college level work compared to focusing on supporting under prepared students to be successful.

As mentioned previously, many faculty expressed that academics need to be the over-riding priority consistent with the University’s mission and commitment to student learning. Many administrators stated that, while they are dedicated to academics, student learning is greatly influenced by many other factors and that priorities need to respond to rapid change and declining revenue. Until we focus in on the particulars in the context of a mutually-

acceptable future vision, we will find it difficult to untangle these differing perspectives on priorities.

Some interviewees, consisting of both administrators and faculty, expressed their support for the President’s vision as expressed in Destination 2010, but believe that much of the campus does not understand or accept it because there was inadequate education and dialogue around this vision. These interviewees characterized this as a “missed opportunity” on the part of the administration.

In the context of the pressures administrators and faculty members face from within the institution as well as from the scarcity resources, a shared vision becomes even more central to the University’s ability to set priorities in order to successfully pursue its mission. It is also important to note that some faculty and administrators saw the possibility of improvement growing out of such positive actions as the UBAC, Strategic Planning Council, and some recent actions of the President. (This is represented on Figure 1 by the yellow arrows leading upwards from the bottom influencing the system above.) These particular administrators and faculty members in our interviews did express some optimism that the University community could come together to develop a common vision that will meet the complex and uncertain challenges that it faces.

Conclusion

Using the best practice conditions the Center routinely uses to assess the potential success of a collaborative problem-solving process, the Center concludes that there is the potential to develop a collaborative strategy to address the University’s issues of governance, culture, and climate. Specifically, our analysis finds that:

- 1 There are many issues in which there is shared concern and very few issues in which there appears to be mutually exclusive underlying interests at play.
- 2 There is general recognition of the challenges facing the University and mutual understanding regarding these challenges.
- 3 The issues present the opportunity for mutual gains and there is no other arena in which the parties are likely to obtain a better solution independently.
- 4 There is recognition that significant external pressures require working together to address the challenges.

5 Most interviewees expressed recognition of the interdependence of the Faculty and Administration in successfully addressing these challenges.

6 Almost all interviewees were supportive of trying a collaborative strategy to address governance, culture, and climate.

With regard to the final condition for potential success, the President and Faculty Senate may decide whether to provide the time and resources necessary for a collaborative process.

The analysis discussed above suggests key leverage points that can assist the University in moving away from the above dynamics and toward a problem-solving and collaborative culture. Leverage points include:

- Establishing common ground between the President and the Faculty Senate supported by administrators and faculty at large, on the meaning of and the formal operational protocols for Administration - Faculty consultation and shared governance. This would include a clarification of the governance and leadership roles and responsibilities of the President, Provost, Faculty Senate and other key administrators including Deans, Chairs and academic departments.
- Creating vehicles where the Administration and Faculty can thoughtfully explore and reconcile their differing perspectives and assumptions on the nature, mission, and future of the University, including priorities.
- Providing opportunities and incentives for the President, his Administration and the Faculty Senate to craft new cultures and behaviors more supportive of collaboration and each other.
- Responding to the expressed needs for University-wide unity, clarity of vision for the University's future, and a much more cohesive campus community. To achieve this, students, staff, alumni as well as faculty and administration need to actively engage in conversations that will influence the decisions the University makes on its priorities and future.

The next section on Recommendations expands on these leverage points for the benefit of the whole University. The Recommendations, taken as a whole, advocate for a cultural shift within University that embraces collaboration.

Part Three

Recommendations

Introduction

The analysis of the Assessment data indicates that a multi-faceted collaborative strategy could be productive in helping the campus community address issues related to governance, culture, and climate. This strategy would build on steps already underway. Data from the assessment interviews pointed to the following as signs of positive change: the 2007 Strategic Plan and the process used to develop the Plan, the University Budget Advisory Committee along with the overall transparency around the budget, the work of the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Goals Committee and the Administration's response to those recommendations, and faculty outreach initiatives by the President. The University's Strategic Plan was adopted unanimously by the Faculty Senate in November 2007. We believe this level of support was related to the multiple opportunities and forums available to provide feedback on the draft Plan, the transparent nature of the process, and the efforts of the Strategic Planning Committee to improve their draft based on the comments received.

In this section of the Assessment, the Center for Collaborative Policy offers recommendations the campus community could take to move the University further in creating shared ownership in the future of the University. These recommendations were developed by applying best practices of collaborative process to the analysis of the assessment interview data. It is the decision of the President and Faculty Senate whether to undertake these steps, and of the campus community as a whole whether to support them. As the leader of the University, the President has a particularly important role in taking the first steps toward collaborative change.

Please note that the Assessment focuses on the Administration and Faculty. In the original description of the Assessment provided in September of 2007, the Center for Collaborative Policy proposed that students and staff be interviewed as a critical part of the Assessment process. Many interviewees suggested that alumni should also be included in the assessment. However, given the complexity and contentiousness of the faculty – administration issues, once the Center began the interview process we made the decision to postpone interviews with students and staff until adequate time and resources could be devoted to that very important task. We also agree that alumni should be included in an assessment.

As described below, during the Summer and Fall of 2008, the Center recommends that it conduct assessments of students, staff and alumni, which would detail each of these constituencies' perception of their roles, concerns, desires, willingness to participate in important campus decisions, and their aspirations for the future of the University. The resulting document will lay the foundation for more meaningful participation of these three groups in the life and future of the University.

A number of steps, described below, are needed to address the issues and concerns that the assessment surfaced. We recommend that all of the steps offered need to be undertaken rather than focusing on only a few. The conditions for collaborative change need to be cultivated and specific initiatives taken to deal with challenges the University faces. These recommendations are designed to create productive long-term structures, processes, agreements, policies, understandings and cultural norms for the University on a "go-forward" basis. For this collaborative process to work, all parties need to start with a clean slate and hold each other accountable from this point forward, rather than looking from the present back to the past.

Before identifying specific recommendations, the Center first offers proposed goals and an outcome as well as an overview of the overall proposed collaborative process. This provides a context to better understand the Recommendations.

Proposed Goals for the Collaborative Process

1 Administration and Faculty Joint Leadership: The development of an ethos and structures to support the Administration and Faculty working in concert to exercise leadership characterized by collaborative decision-making, consultation, respectful interpersonal and institutional interactions, and a mutual understanding of each other's as well as joint responsibilities.

2 Productive Working Relationships between the Administration and Faculty and Resolution of Key Issues regarding University Governance as well as the Future of the University: The development of a productive working relationship and significant common ground between the Faculty Senate, as well as Faculty as a whole, and the Administration, particularly the President and Provost, to resolve key contentious issues relating to University governance as well as the future of the University. The resolution of these issues is critical to the future of the University.

3 Campus-Wide Engagement on the Future of the University: The broad campus community of students, staff, alumni as well as administrators and faculty participating and deliberating together to shape the future of the University through the development of shared vision, collective purpose, and commitment to the long-term success of the University. Efforts related to this goal would be an important vehicle to fulfill Goal Three of the Strategic Plan (Adopted November 2007) ¹⁴

¹⁴ Goal Three of the University's Strategic Plan: Enhance campus-wide engagement in and responsibility for the resolution of complex issues and in the planning and implementation of campus policies.

- Develop a campus culture that exhibits respect for all members of the campus community.
- Develop a campus-wide understanding of the higher education environment in which we operate.
- Implement effective communication channels across all levels of the campus.
- Foster active and constructive participation in campus decision making across all constituent groups.

Rationale: Our ability to accomplish campus goals and to meet our many challenges rests upon our ability to identify and solve problems collectively, to strengthen our shared values as a community. The many constituent groups on campus must achieve at least *general* agreement concerning our goals and the processes by which they are derived and implemented. The discourse and debate may be spirited and even lengthy, but the underlying assumption of integrity, civility, and accountability of the participants is essential. Openness, transparency, and the use of evidence-based inquiry into problems and potential solutions are critical to meeting this objective.

Proposed Outcome for a Successful Collaborative Process

Outcome: Development of a collaborative culture empowering the campus to fulfill the University's primary purpose in the face of rapidly changing contexts and challenges of historic proportions.

University's Primary Purpose: Achieving ever-higher levels of student learning and academic excellence while optimizing student access and success. (University's Strategic Plan, Adopted November, 2007)

Overview of the Proposed Collaborative Process

The Recommendations of the Assessment grew out of the Center's analysis of the assessment interviews and are designed to promote the Goals and Outcome identified above.

As part of its data collection, the Center conducted research on the issues that public universities around the country view as problem areas for their campus and areas of particular controversy between administrators and faculty. (See [Attachment A](#) for a list of these areas. Also see the Center's website, www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment, for the complete narrative of this research.) In the Assessment, many of these same issues were identified as significant unresolved problems between our Administration and Faculty. It is a relief to recognize that contentious issues within our University are very similar to those challenging many other public institutions of higher education. If we constructively manage these issues, our University would be seen as a national role model for others to emulate.

Most of the contentious issues between our Administration and Faculty center around two themes. The first theme concerns the challenges posed by the inter-related issues of how decisions are made, consultation, shared governance and leadership. The other theme involves identifying the University's vision, values, and future in the context of predicted and ongoing financial constraints. Issues related to resource allocation and priorities, faculty workload, and financial stability are among the many issues to be resolved as part of the second theme. Taken together, these two themes cover most of the deeper issues associated with the Spring 2007 vote of no-confidence. Also, these themes directly relate to the two unproductive discourses that have characterized the administration-faculty relationship for some time. (For a discussion of these discourses, see Part Two of this Assessment.) The University will find it challenging to fulfill its purpose and engage the broader campus in creating the University's future absent

resolution of these two sets of issues. Many of the recommendations offered below are designed to create the conditions for addressing these issues. The Recommendations, and therefore the collaborative process we are recommending, are organized into three time frames: Spring Semester 2008, Fall Semester, 2008 and Spring Semester 2009. Extending the implementation of the recommendations over this time period respects the very real constraints of the University resources at this time – both human and financial.

We also call for an evaluation of the collaborative process after each of the three semesters to determine if the gain or potential gain to the University justifies the continued expenditure of resources. For example, the amount of time spent -- by all sectors of the campus community -- on a successful collaborative effort can be quite significant. Let's make sure the efforts expended are worth it.

The following overview describes only the highlights of the Recommendations. More specific proposals are included in the actual Recommendation Section to follow.

Spring Semester 2008: Initiating the Conditions for the Development of a Collaborative Campus Culture

When this report is released, the Spring 2008 semester will be more than half over. We propose focusing on two key efforts:

- **Best Collaborative Management Practices:** Coaching the President, Administration, Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Senate to pursue more collaborative methods in working with each other.
- **Consultation, Shared Governance and Leadership:** Convening a team of administrators and faculty leaders which will begin to address the inter-related issues of how decisions are made, consultation, shared governance and leadership. As identified in the Recommendations, the full Faculty Senate, the faculty-at-large, and other administrators will need to be consulted on this problem-solving endeavor. This team may likely need to continue meeting into the Fall 2008 semester. Ultimately, the President and Faculty Senate will need to approve any policy growing out of this effort.

Fall Semester 2008: Continued Development of the Collaborative Culture of the Campus

The effort on the resolution of the administration-faculty governance and leadership issues is likely to continue into the Summer and Fall of 2008. Other activities for the Fall 2008 include:

- **Students, Staff and Alumni Assessment:** Conducting assessments of students, staff and alumni, which explore each of these constituencies' perception of their roles, concerns, desires, willingness to participate in important campus decisions, and their aspirations for the future of the University. The assessments of staff and alumni could begin in the summer of 2008, if resources allow. The resulting document will lay the foundation for more meaningful participation of these three groups in the life and future of the University.
- **Developing a Draft Proposal on the Future of the University:** Convening a team of administrators and faculty leaders to discuss in pragmatic, day-to-day terms the University's vision, values and future in the context of predicted and ongoing financial constraints. As stated above, issues related to University priorities, faculty workload, and financial stability are among the key issues to be addressed. (Also see [Attachment A](#) for other issues to be addressed.) The team will be focused on developing a proposal on the *Future of the University*, which will build upon the recently adopted University Strategic Plan. The proposal on the *Future of the University* will then be taken out to the larger campus community for review and dialogue.
- **Incorporation of Students, Staff and Alumni:** Meaningfully incorporating, student, staff and alumni representation in the administration-faculty team on the Future of the University.
- **Campus-wide Distribution of Proposal on the *Future of the University*:** Gaining the President's and Faculty Senate approval to distribute the draft statement or proposal on *the Future of the University*, developed by the team discussed above, to the campus community.
- **Best Collaborative Management Practices, Continued:** Coaching the President, Administration, Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Senate to pursue more collaborative methods in working with each other. This is a continuation of several recommendations from the Spring 2008 tasks.

Spring Semester 2009: Campus-wide Engagement in the Future of the University

The recommendations in this category provide for a process of campus-wide engagement on issues of critical importance to the future of the University. The point of departure for this campus-wide discussion would be the draft statement on the *Future of the University* developed by the campus Team described above. The momentum started by the Strategic Planning Council and the adopted University Strategic Plan (November 2007) will also be an important point of departure for this campus-wide effort. This kind of engagement would provide opportunities and structures for discussions among and between students, staff, alumni, faculty, and administrators. The purpose of this campus-wide engagement is to respond to the much articulated need for the development of a broad and participatory campus community with a shared sense of the University's vision, values and mission.

Recommendations

Initiating the Conditions for the Development of a Collaborative Campus Culture

Spring 2008

In order for the Administration, Faculty Senate and faculty at large to jointly pursue positive change, a space needs to be supported for creative and candid dialogue without recriminations, retribution for disagreement, and anger. This requires that the President and leaders of the Faculty Senate need to set the example of being open to each other's differing perspectives and listening respectfully to those perspectives. During the initiation of the steps suggested below, we recommend that the Administration and Faculty Senate, particularly the leaders of the Faculty Senate, focus on future actions as opposed to past perceptions of grievances.

The Center found different perspectives and interests articulated by the President, Administrators, Faculty Senators, and many faculty members that we believe are all legitimate and sincerely held. In order for a collaborative strategy to be feasible, these differing perspectives and interests must be recognized and respected by all parties as they engage to jointly decide how to work together in the best interests of the University.

A. Create the Space for a Collaborative Strategy to Evolve

Recommendation A.1 Interest-Based Change

All parties on campus who choose to engage in carrying out the recommendation of this Report should use the best practices for collaborative problem-solving often used in public policy settings. This practice calls on participants to start by first understanding their own and others' underlying interests and concerns and focusing on those interests rather than on stated positions and demands. Underlying interests are aspirations, hopes and needs, often discovered by asking the question "Why." Then, participants engage in joint "fact finding," which grounds all discussion in mutually-acceptable data and information.¹⁵ This step is followed by inventing options to achieve mutual gains and consensus-seeking on solutions in good faith. Throughout, participants focus on the problems that need to be addressed rather than on particular individuals.

¹⁵ The best practice of joint fact-finding used in public policy collaborative problem-solving is similar to the principle articulated in Goal Two of the University's Strategic Plan: "Create and sustain an organizational structure and culture that facilitates evidence-based decision-making and purposeful planning in all important endeavors."

Recommendation A.2 As appropriate, the Center will conduct mini-trainings on the use of interest-based negotiation and problem-solving practices with the Administration, Faculty Senate, and other interested faculty members. In time, the goal would be to offer these trainings to all campus constituencies, including students, staff and alumni. These trainings will pave the way for a broad campus-wide engagement on the future of the University, as discussed in Recommendation E.2 below.

B. Development of Collaborative Management Practices by Both the Administration and Faculty Senate

The Assessment revealed a wide-spread perception of unproductive behaviors and group norms on the part of both the President and his Administration, and the Faculty Senate. This is not unusual in complex institutions challenged by rapid change and uncertain resources, but typically encumbers performance and leads to unmet vision and goals. Sacramento State has an incredible pool of talent with which to meet the challenges posed by constrained government funding, public attitudes toward higher education, and larger global, demographic and socio-economic forces. The first step in unleashing this talent is to change how leaders deal with each other and their campus constituents as they do their day-to-day work.

Recommendation B.1 The Center will provide a collaborative management coach to the President, Provost and identified Vice Presidents and Deans. The President and his Administration will need to be comfortable with the coach selected. This coach will meet privately with the President and key Administrators and, as needed, attend important meetings (e.g. President's Cabinet, Deans' Meeting, etc.) to discuss ongoing events and how on-the-ground University business can be conducted in the context of collaborative management best practices.

Recommendation B.2 The Center will provide a collaborative management coach to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and / or Faculty Senate will need to be comfortable with the coach selected. This coach will meet with Faculty Senate Executive Committee and attend other important meetings (e.g. Faculty Senate Meetings; Faculty Senate Committee Meetings, etc.) to discuss ongoing events and how the Faculty Senate conducts its work in the context of collaborative management best practices.

C. Seeking Administration – Faculty Common Ground Governance and Leadership

Recommendation C.1 Faculty – Administration Team on Consultation, Shared Governance, and Leadership

We recommend that the Administration and Faculty Senate create and sponsor a Team to define and come to consensus on: a) the meaning of and operational protocols for Administration - Faculty consultation and shared governance; and b) the nature, meaning and applied description of both administrative and faculty leadership.

The need for such a discussion came up repeatedly in the assessment interviews. These discussions would also include discussions on how other campus sectors (e.g. Departments, Colleges, staff, students, and alumni) would participate in University consultation and decision-making. Consultation among and between the various sectors on important items will enrich the quality of decisions made.

Equally important is the linked discussion on the nature, meaning and applied description of both administration leadership and faculty leadership. This would involve developing specific proposals to address administration and faculty leadership development as well as how the administration and faculty can support each other's unique leadership roles. The linkage between leadership and responsibility should also be defined and addressed.

The Center recommends that the President actively participate in these discussions along with other members of his Administration.

C.1 Product / Deliverable: A written policy statement addressing Administration - Faculty Consultation, Shared Governance and Leadership, approved by the President and the Faculty Senate. If there are parts of the statement that directly affect more than the faculty and administration – the students, staff and alumni – those parts should be preliminarily adopted, pending a larger campus discussion. (See Recommendation E.2 below.)

Recommendation C.2
Composition of
Administration -
Faculty Teams

For purposes of this Assessment Report, the groups of administrators and faculty working on Recommendations C.1 as well as D.2 will be called “Teams.” The Teams should be of a manageable size and comprised of administrators, faculty who are Senators as well faculty who are not Senators. The Center recommends that the set three criteria below be used in selecting both administrators and faculty. Additionally, with regard to the faculty members, we recommend that there be a balance among Assistant, Associate and Full Professors.

- Ability to devote time to the Team’s work. Teams would likely need to meet at least two times a month. With occasional extra meetings as needed. Document review will need to occur between meetings.
- Commitment to seek common ground and work in good faith, with an ability to put the past behind and create a new future without blame and recrimination.
- Ability to place the collective interest of the campus ahead of loyalties to Offices, Colleges, Departments or other campus units to which the individual belongs.

Recommendation C.3
Administration -
Faculty Team on
Governance
and Leadership:
Communication with
Their Constituents

The Center recommends that the Faculty and Administration Team working on this issue consult on an ongoing basis with the Faculty Senate, larger faculty, and other administrators as they develop their proposals. Proposals developed without discussion and consultation from the larger community of faculty and administrators will not be sufficient to meet the challenges ahead.

Recommendation C.4 Broad-Based Discussions on the University’s Strategic Plan Priority Regarding the Implementation of a “Strategically Focused, Campus-Wide Effort to Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation Rates.”¹⁶

The Center recommends that the Provost’s Office and the Strategic Planning Council launch broad-based campus-wide discussions on student recruitment, retention and graduation rates during the Spring semester of 2008 and continue these discussions as needed into future semesters. We recommend that these discussions involve faculty, administrators, students, staff and alumni. The Center is available for consultation on how to design inclusive and effective venues for these broad-based dialogues. The data from the assessment interviews indicate a need for more clarification on the roles of faculty and the administration in student learning and adaptations that are likely needed to foster more robust student learning. We recommend that discussions on student learning should be incorporated into the dialogues on recruitment, retention and graduation rates.

Recommendation C.5 Evaluation of Activities A.1 through C.3

The President, Provost, and Faculty Senate Executive Committee should jointly evaluate the progress made on activities A.1 through C.3 after the close of the Spring 2008 semester to determine if the resources required to continue implementing the recommendations proposed for the Fall of 2008 are justified.

¹⁶ Goal One of the University’s Strategic Plan: Implement a strategically focused, campus-wide effort to improve recruitment, retention, and graduation rates

- Foster an academic and campus-life culture whereby recruitment, retention, graduation, and student success in all its forms are embraced and pursued as the responsibility of the entire campus community—faculty, staff, students, and alumni.
- Enhance and better integrate current campus efforts to improve recruitment, retention, and graduation rates.
- Develop undergraduate and graduate recruitment targets that reflect a sustainable balance of academic excellence, access, demand, systematically managed growth, workforce development, and campus capacity.
- Achieve a 6-year graduation rate of 46% (currently at 41%) for first-time freshmen and a 4-year graduation rate of 62% (currently at 57%) for transfer students by 2012 -13.
- Set appropriate goals for graduation rates and time-to-degree-completion for our graduate programs.

Rationale: Institutional success is contingent in large part upon attracting, retaining, and graduating students. While we are increasing the applicant pool, enrollment is at best steady. Enrollment is the major determinant of our campus’s general funds. Rather than make educated guesses about what our enrollment numbers—and, by extension, our budget—will look like in future years, we must manage enrollment in ways that are both educationally and fiscally responsible. Toward that end, we must recruit students and then enhance the retention and graduation rates of all who choose to enroll here. We must also recognize that our efforts to attract, retain and graduate students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels depend on the creation of a positive learning environment that fosters academic and personal growth.

Recommendation D.1 Student, Staff and Alumni Assessments

As previously mentioned, in the original description of the Assessment provided in September of 2007, the Center proposed that students and staff be interviewed as a critical part of the Assessment process. However, given the complexity and contentiousness of the faculty and administration issues, once the Center began the interview process, we made the decision to postpone interviews with students and staff until adequate time and resources could be devoted to that very important task.

During the Summer and Fall 2008, we recommend that the Center conduct assessments of students, staff and alumni, which would detail each of these constituencies' perception of their roles, concerns, desires, willingness to participate in important campus decisions, and their aspirations for the future of the University.¹⁷ The resulting document, which will include specific recommendations, will lay the foundation for more meaningful participation of these three groups in the life and future of the University. This document will also inform the Administration-Faculty Team discussions as described in recommendations C.1 and D.2. The completed Assessment will be available to the campus community.

Recommendation D.2 Administration Team on the Future of the University

We recommend that the Administration and Faculty Senate create and sponsor a Team to develop shared meaning on the deeper issues that currently cause contention and confusion between them. These issues relate to the larger and inter-related issues of the University's vision and student mission, priority setting, financial stability, and faculty workload and career development. (Also see [Attachment A](#) for other issues to be addressed.) The Assessments of students, staff and alumni will provide important information for these discussions.

These discussions are meant to forge a deeper joint understanding between the Administration and Faculty on the long-term vision for the University and will build upon the direction provided in the recently adopted University

¹⁷ With regard to the Staff Assessment: We will not be addressing issues that relate to collective bargaining.

Recommendation D.2
Continued

Strategic Plan. These particular discussions will provide a framework for the issues to be discussed as part of the campus-wide dialogue on the Future of the University as discussed below in Recommendation E.

The Center recommends incorporating, student, staff and alumni participation on this administration-faculty team after the faculty and administration have initially discussed some of the more contentious issues between them.

What do we want the University to be, for example in five years, and how do we get there together? The purpose of these discussions is not to make resource decisions for the current fiscal year. Hopefully current discussions will be helped by whatever policy emerges from the discussions on consultation and shared governance. (See C.1 above.) Rather, this discussion will be designed to develop a joint understanding of the unique role California State University, Sacramento plays within the CSU system, in the region, and in California, particularly in a time of declining state support for public education.

Other topics that will certainly be part of this discussion include the University's approach to the appropriate mix of students, including students who are prepared for college and those needing remedial assistance, the tensions between academic excellence and broad-based access, the need to both provide a liberal arts education and workforce preparation to undergraduates, the goals and allocation of external fundraising, the University's financial stability and what that means for enrollment, class-size and pedagogical integrity, and how these issues affect priority setting and resource allocation on this campus.¹⁸

D.2 Product / Deliverable: A written draft document on the *Future of the University*, discussing the vision, mission, and sustainability of the University. This document will build upon the direction set in the November 2007 Strategic Plan and provide the point of departure for the Spring 2009 campus-wide engagement on the future of the University as described below.

¹⁸ The Strategic Planning Council called attention to the need for these discussions. Specifically, Goal One of the University's Strategic Plan (third bullet) states: "Develop undergraduate and graduate recruitment targets that reflect a sustainable balance of academic excellence, access, demand, systematically managed growth, workforce development, and campus capacity." The Strategic Plan challenges the University to find the right balance in priority-setting between a variety of pressing University needs in a time of significant fiscal constraints.

Recommendation D.3 (See Recommendation A.1, A.2, B.1 and B.2 above.)
Continuation of the
Collaborative Coaching
Regarding the President,
Administration and
Faculty Senate
Management Practices

Recommendation D.4 (See Recommendation C.1 above.)
Continuation, if
Needed, of Faculty –
Administration Team
on Consultation,
Shared Governance,
and Leadership

Recommendation D.5 The President, Provost, and Faculty Senate Executive
Evaluation of Activities Committee should jointly evaluate the progress made
to Date at the Close of during the Fall 2008 semester to determine if the resources
the Fall 2008 Semester required to continue implementing the recommendations
proposed for the Spring of 2009 are justified.

The deeper involvement of the entire campus community in shaping the future of the University is the culmination of this collaborative process. A key purpose of campus-wide engagement is to respond to the much articulated need for the development of a broad and participatory campus community with a shared sense of vision, purpose and commitment. These campus-wide efforts would also be an important vehicle to fulfill Goal Three of the Strategic Plan (Adopted November 2007 – see Footnote 12 at the beginning of Part Three). This engagement would provide opportunities and structures for discussions among and between students, staff, alumni, faculty and administrators on an ongoing basis. The campus-wide discussions on the University's Strategic Plan provide a critical foundation for this future effort.

Recommendation E.1
Oversight Role of the
Campus Team
Working on the Future
of the University

We recommend that the campus Team working on the proposal for the *Future of the University* would oversee this campus-wide engagement process, with the assistance of the Center or another expert in large-scale dialogue processes. (See Recommendation D.2 for a description of this Team.)

Recommendation E.2
Extensive Campus-
Wide Engagement on
the Future of the
University

The point of departure for these Spring 2009 discussions will be the draft document on the *Future of the University*, developed by the campus Team described in Recommendation D.2.

Multiple campus forums should be convened to discuss core issues that will shape the University on a long-term basis. The Center, or persons with experience in implementing large-scale dialogue processes, would be involved in the design and implementation of this campus-wide activity. The design would create venues for the whole campus community – administration, faculty, students, staff, and alumni – to talk with each other in structured ways to move the campus toward common ground on core issues. Dialogues such as these typically start in smaller venues and often within one constituency (i.e. faculty department meetings; ASI meetings, University Staff Assembly, etc.) then move to ever larger groups comprised of cross-sections of the University community

The results of initial dialogues would be captured for further reflection and discussion by larger groups of broad and diverse campus constituencies. Continual written refinement of the trends emerging in the conversations is essential for this process to work. Group discussions build

Recommendation E.2
Continued

on the shoulders of previous dialogues. It is a creative and dynamic iterative process.

After a number of progressively larger and more refined discussions, the Center recommends the convening of a campus-wide Convocation in the Spring of 2009 to develop the foundations for a final written product on topics concerning the future of the University. After review from the “Oversight Team” (see Recommendation E.1), the product would then be forwarded to the President and Faculty Senate for consideration and action. Typically, one of the recommendations coming out of this kind of large-scale dialogue is the creation of ongoing mechanisms to ensure that engagement of the broader constituencies in the University’s evolving vision becomes a normal way of doing business.

E.2 Product / Deliverable: A final and formal document on the *Future of the University*, discussing the vision, mission and sustainability of the University, approved by the President and Faculty Senate.

Concluding Note

As discussed at the initiation of the Assessment in September of 2007, this Assessment Report will be made available to the campus community and formally submitted to the President and Faculty Senate for discussions and joint action. The Center for Collaborative Policy encourages the Administration and Faculty Senate to review and discuss this Report in the spirit of Recommendations A.1 and A.2, which stress the creation of an evolving collaborative culture within the campus.

The Center for Collaborative Policy thanks the President, his Administration, the members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Senate of California State University, Sacramento for providing us with a this unique opportunity to assess the University's governance, culture, and climate. The Center is also grateful to the 59 interviewees who freely gave their time and insights for this Assessment.

This Report was written by the following Center for Collaborative professional neutrals: Susan Sherry, Executive Director, and David Booher, Senior Consultant. The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following Center staff in carrying out this Assessment: Associate Director Lisa Beutler, Managing Senior Mediator Gregory Bourne, Graphic Design and Support Staff Tina Chen and Assistant Facilitator David Sumi. We also would like to thank William Leach, Ph.D., the Center's Director of Research, who authored the literature review with the assistance of Center consultants Dorian Fougères, Ph.D. and Public Outreach Trainee Charlotte Chorneau.

The Center for Collaborative Policy is a unit within the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies at California State University, Sacramento. For a short description of the Center, please visit www.csus.edu/ccp/assessment. Refer to Appendix 1.

April, 2008
Sacramento California

ATTACHMENT A

Various Perspectives on Public Higher Education Are Represented at Sacramento State As Well As At Other Institutions of Higher Education

- Some stress the importance of a traditional liberal arts and sciences education. Others emphasize preparing students to enter the workforce and offering courses to satisfy market demand.
- Some focus on the importance of attracting students who are already prepared for college level work. Others focus on the importance of preparing students, especially low income and ethnic students, for college level work as the responsibility of the institution. This is often characterized as a tension between “excellence” and “access.”
- Some see the university as a regional institution with a special responsibility to local and regional students, especially ethnic and low income students. Others see the university as attracting students beyond the region with an ability to offer a complete college experience.
- Some at teaching-focused universities often prefer to focus on teaching. Others often emphasize that faculty should also conduct research.
- Some emphasize the need for basic educational infrastructure, such as well equipped classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. Others focus on visible capital improvement projects (such as recreational facilities, athletic venues, health centers, food courts, and bookstores) that they believe will generate revenue, enrollment, or interest from donors.
- Some emphasize smaller classes for pedagogical reasons, for example affording more opportunities for in-class discussion. Others seek to increase enrollment and decrease the faculty-to-student ratio as a way of responding to financial constraints. From the latter perspective, use of distance electronic technology is a key way of handling more students with fewer faculty and less physical space.
- Some prefer traditional day-time course hours. Others emphasize student need, particularly for working students, for courses offered on nights, weekends and summers.
- Some prefer teaching highly specialized courses that match their area of expertise. Others emphasize the need to teach basic courses that appeal to a much broader cross-section of the student body.

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FIGURE 1

