

**CSU, Bakersfield: WASC Senior College and University Commission  
(WSCUC) Institutional Report**

**Spring 2019**

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## **ESSAY 1 – INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 ABOUT CSU BAKERSFIELD (CFRS 1.1 and 1.8)**

California State University (CSU) Bakersfield is a comprehensive regional university located on a 375-acre site in Kern County in the southern San Joaquin Valley, one of the poorest regions in the state. Since its founding in 1965, CSU Bakersfield has steadily expanded, remaining the only comprehensive four-year regional university within a hundred miles. Through its established excellence in academia, diversity, service, and community engagement, CSU Bakersfield is committed to transforming the lives of its students and community. The world-class faculty, nearly 75% of whom hold terminal degrees, represent nations from all over the globe. The University provides academic opportunity to nearly 11,000 students at both the main campus in Bakersfield and the satellite campus in Antelope Valley, with 50,000 alumni from the four academic schools: Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education.

The University offers undergraduate and master's degrees, a doctoral degree in educational leadership, teaching credentials, and numerous post-baccalaureate and post-master's certificates and other professional development programs, some of them through Extended University. With over 70 percent of alumni remaining and working within the Central Valley, CSU Bakersfield supports ongoing social, cultural and economic development in the region. The University also participates in NCAA Division I athletic competitions. Since 2012, CSU Bakersfield has competed successfully in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC), and will join the Big West Conference in coming years. CSU Bakersfield is recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and is a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), which represents more than 400 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America and Spain.

### **1.1 OUR VISION FOR CSU BAKERSFIELD: CURRENT PRIORITIES AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE INSTITUTION**

CSU Bakersfield is a comprehensive public university committed to offering excellent undergraduate and graduate programs that advance the intellectual and personal development of its students. An emphasis on student learning is enhanced by a commitment to scholarship, diversity, service, global awareness and life-long learning. The University collaborates with partners in the community to increase the region's overall educational attainment, enhance its quality of life, and support its economic development.

In order to honor its purpose and commitment to achieving a vision of excellence in all areas, the University is guided by a set of core values that shapes its work with students, faculty, staff and the region. These core values include the following six commitments: (1) developing the intellectual and personal potential of every student; (2) supporting the intellectual and professional development of all faculty and staff; (3) nurturing a civil and collegial campus environment that values the diversity of persons and ideas; (4) engaging one another with respect, trustworthiness, ethical behavior, and self-reflection; (5) promoting active and informed engagement of faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders in shared governance; and

(6) being accountable to the public, alumni, students, and one another for achieving the mission, vision, and goals of the university.

Located in Kern County, CSU Bakersfield draws the majority of its students from the local region. Kern County High Schools have long been characterized as educationally underserved, with low Academic Performance Index (API) scores and low college-going rates. In educational attainment, the local adult population's rates are significantly lower than the rest of the state. Regional middle schools and high schools face considerable challenges in graduating students and preparing them for college. CSU Bakersfield has always been challenged to provide a high-quality university education to a service area with a history of low educational attainment. As a result, creating the conditions that foster student success in college has never been more important. Student success is promoted when students gain greater awareness of their learning styles, learning habits and thinking patterns and realize that learning is not static.

Under the administration of President Horace Mitchell, the University adopted five strategic goals: (1) Extend Faculty and Academic Excellence and Diversity; (2) Enhance the Quality of the Student Experience; (3) Strengthen Community Engagement; (4) Develop an Excellent and Diverse Staff; (5) Develop a Campus Culture with a Sense of Community and a Commitment to Organizational Excellence. These goals supported the University's plans for student population growth, with an emphasis on enrolling more first-time freshmen directly from high school and attracting students from neighboring counties, states and other countries. To meet the changing student, community, and economic development needs of the region, many new academic programs and student services have been developed, most dramatically during the campus conversion from a quarter to a semester system.

## **1.2 CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC GOOD**

Based in California's southern San Joaquin Valley—where rates of higher education rank among the state's lowest, and rates of poverty and health problems among the highest—CSU Bakersfield serves an especially vital role in the community. As one campus among the 23 in the CSU system, CSU Bakersfield fully supports the mission of the CSU, including these goals: “to advance and extend knowledge, learning, and culture, especially throughout California;” “to prepare significant numbers of educated, responsible people to contribute to California's schools, economy, culture, and future;” “to encourage and provide access to an excellent education to all who are prepared for and wish to participate in collegiate study;” “to prepare students for an international, multi-cultural society;” and “to provide public services that enrich the university and its communities.”

Not only does CSU Bakersfield's overall mission emphasize community engagement, so too does the mission of each of CSU Bakersfield's academic schools. The School of Arts and Humanities “connect[s] the arts and humanities to everyday life” in order to help students “create better communities for themselves and their families” [link: [School of Arts and Humanities](#)]; the School of Business and Public Administration prepares graduates “to address the challenging issues facing businesses and organizations in our region” [link: [School of Business and Public Administration](#)]; the School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering “prepare[s] students for leadership roles in the community” [link: [School of Natural](#)

Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering]; and the School of Social Sciences and Education “address[es] local, regional, and state needs” and “prepare[s] future leaders, professionals, and community advocates” to “work toward increasing the community’s understanding and acceptance of complex social, racial, and gender issues and toward creating positive social change” [link: [School of Social Sciences and Education](#)].

CSU Bakersfield’s faculty, staff, and students contribute to the public good in a variety of ways. The University trains the teachers, nurses, police officers and business leaders who ensure a brighter future for Kern County, and through community service, field work and internships, CSU Bakersfield students put theory into practice while learning valuable skills outside the classroom. The Center for Community Engagement and Career Education (CECE), founded in 2009, works with nearly 700 local businesses and nonprofit organizations, coordinating service learning, academic internships, direct service and volunteer activities associated with academic credit, and has overseen consistent growth in service learning courses. In 2011, CECE received a Gold Award from Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

CSU Bakersfield highly values and recognizes the many ways that its faculty, staff, students, and community members contribute to the public good. Campus awards and celebrations include the Faculty Leadership and Service Award, the venerated President’s Medal, the CSU Bakersfield Alumni Hall of Fame and Rising Runner award, the Outstanding Community Service and Outstanding Educational Program student awards, the Outstanding Community Service faculty and student awards, the CSU Bakersfield Athletics Community Service team award, the John Brock Community Service Awards, and the Wendy Wayne Awards for Exemplary Ethical Behavior. The Kegley Institute of Ethics (KIE) contributes to CSUB's commitment to the public good in several key areas. These include community ethics workshops led by CSUB faculty for local K-12 schools and community organizations, as well as ethics events that are free and open to the campus and greater Bakersfield community.

In 2015, CSU Bakersfield was one of only 83 colleges and universities nationwide honored for the first time with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s Community Engagement Classification. This hard-won honor is built on the collective strengths of many innovative university-community partnerships that engage an array of constituents and interests. Local business and industry executives, non-profit, education, and community leaders, and alumni sit on the CSU Bakersfield Foundation Board, the President’s Community Advisory Council, the Council of 100 (business leaders), the Alumni Association, the Big Six (local superintendents and community college chancellors), CSU Bakersfield Industry and Education Roundtable, the Enrollment Advisory Council, and the Executive Advisory Councils of each of the four academic schools. Valuable dialogue and collaboration occur in these groups, which also include representatives of University departments and units across Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Athletics, University Advancement, Business and Administrative Services, and Extended University.

CSU Bakersfield has received numerous national accolades in recent years, including:

- The Equality of Opportunity Project: #3 for the upward mobility of its students. This measured the number of students who enrolled in the late 1990s and moved from the bottom fifth of income distribution to the top three-fifths, 2017
- Washington Monthly: Number 5 in master's degrees, 2018
- Washington Monthly: "Best Bang for the Buck," Western Region, 2018
- Campaign for College Opportunity: Champion for Higher Education for excelling at enrolling and graduating Associate Degree for Transfer earners, 2017
- The Wall Street Journal: "A Top University for Student Inclusion," 2017
- California State University system: #4 in STEM grant funding, 2016
- Carnegie Foundation: Community Engagement Classification, 2015
- Brookings: "95th Percentile for Expected Student Earnings," 2015
- Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce: Number 6 for schools yielding the highest salaries, 2015

### **1.3 ACCREDITATION HISTORY AND RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS ACTION LETTERS (CFRs 1.1 and 1.8)**

CSU Bakersfield has been continually accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission or WSCUC since its inception in 1970. For this decennial evaluation, the CSU Bakersfield WSCUC Steering Committee revisited the documents created a decade ago to ascertain trends in the Commission's commendations and recommendations. The documents included in this review were the Capacity and Preparatory review [[doc.1.8:24](#)], the WSCUC Campus Letter from 2010 [[doc. 1.8:22](#)], the WSCUC Campus Letter from 2012 [[doc. 1.8:21](#)] and the WSCUC Campus Letter from 2016 [[doc. 1.8:20](#)]. As the Steering Committee and others reviewed these past action letters, two themes emerged: assessment of student learning and student retention and graduation.

The Commission's attention to CSU Bakersfield's assessment processes spans the decade. In 2010 [[doc. 1.8:22](#)], the Commission's Campus Letter stated that "While the University has areas of excellence and promise in its work on assessment, it also has areas that lag behind... Responsibilities for assessment need to be clearly defined, coordinated, and funded." Due to the Commission's critique in 2010, CSU Bakersfield began an intensive five-year process to revise and restructure its learning outcomes assessment process. The results of this restructuring are detailed in the subsequent essays. In 2016, the Commission's evaluators found that "CSU Bakersfield provided ample evidence of its educational effectiveness: impressive systems are in place for regularly collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reviewing assessment data at the undergraduate and graduate levels; the institution has clear university level goals for student learning and the means to measure them; student progress in meeting these goals is carefully tracked; and General Education has its own assessment mechanisms." The panel praised CSU Bakersfield for creating a well-crafted assessment process that is "faculty 'owned' and that integrates quality assurance practices into the fabric of the university" [[WSCUC Campus Letter 2016 doc. 1.8:20](#)].

Over the decade, the Commission has also highlighted the CSU Bakersfield's efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. In 2012, the Commission's Letter to Campus authors stated:

“Given the University's relatively low graduation rates in comparison to other CSU campuses, real progress on increasing degree completion must continue to be a high priority. Ongoing attention is needed to monitor retention efforts at both undergraduate and graduate levels, to conduct further analyses of attrition patterns (including those of transfer students and other subpopulations) in order to inform further refinements, and to sustain initiatives focused on this vital concern” [[WSCUC Campus Letter 2012 doc. 1.8:21](#)]. As shown throughout this report, CSU Bakersfield is undertaking dramatic actions to improve its retention and graduation rates through the CSU system-wide Graduation Initiative 2025.

#### **1.4 PREPARATION FOR THE REVIEW (CFRs 1.1 and 1.8)**

This review provided an opportunity to engage the entire campus community in the process of continuous improvement. In preparing for the review, a representative body, the WSCUC Steering Committee, has overseen the reaffirmation effort over several years. After consultation with the Provost, the WSCUC Steering Committee members were selected to represent students, faculty and administrators from both the main campus and the university's Antelope Valley Campus [[WSCUC Team Organizational Chart doc. 1.8:07](#)]. Chaired by the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, the Steering Committee held its first meeting on November 4, 2016 [[link: WSCUC Meetings, Team Organizational Chart doc. 1.8:07](#)].

The WSCUC Steering Committee serves as the organizing, consulting and decision-making entity for reaffirmation, and has coordinated the activities of the nine WSCUC Workgroups, which were organized to collect documents, data and information pertaining to the WSCUC Standards and Criteria for Review (CFR). The Workgroups collaborated for six months to amass the hundreds of documents referenced in the Institutional Report. The WSCUC Steering Committee also oversaw the work of the WSCUC Writing Teams, which drafted each section of this Institutional Report. Together, the multiple reaffirmation committees (roughly 45 people) are referred to as the “WSCUC All Team.”

After the WSCUC Workgroups collected documents, the Steering Committee formed the Writing Teams to draft each section of the Institutional Report. The Writing Teams worked throughout 2017-2018 to develop the first drafts, which were completed by May 2018. Over the summer of 2018, the drafts of the Institutional Report were revised by the editor, Marit MacArthur, a Professor of English at CSU Bakersfield, in consultation with the Accreditation Liaison Officer Dr. Vernon B. Harper Jr. and the Associate Dean of Graduation and Undergraduate Studies Dr. Debra Jackson. Subsequent to the editorial revisions, the Institutional Report was shared with the entire campus electronically and in hard copy [[link: WSCUC Institutional Report Draft](#)] for review, and feedback was solicited especially from the Academic Senate. On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, during the General Senate Meeting, the Senators discussed the Institutional Report and the CSUB Lines of Inquiry while providing feedback [[Academic Senate Minutes: CSUB Lines of Inquiry doc. 1.7:12](#)]. Following the Academic Senate meetings, the Steering Committee held several open forums to allow and encourage the wider campus to comment on the report.

#### **1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT**

In preparation for the self-study and the Institutional Report, the WSCUC Team consulted the 2013 Handbook of Accreditation. Accordingly, this report is organized into eight essays (the University chose not to write a ninth essay on an institution-specific theme). Each essay provides detailed description and refers to supporting documents as evidence related to CSU Bakersfield's compliance with the WSCUC Criteria for Review (CFR) and other policies. The citation format used throughout the report is intended to provide easy access to more than 600 supporting documents.

Each citation conveys important information to the reader. The bullet point below shows a sample parenthetical citation: a hyperlinked phrase describes the document, followed by a CFR number and a document number. (In some cases, the description of the supporting document appears in the preceding sentence, and so the description is omitted from the parenthetical citation.) The citation also indicates the type of document, spreadsheet, or slide presentation. The first two digits of the citation number, in this example "1.5," refers to the CFR this document references. The last two digits, in this example "09," refer to the number of documents supporting the respective CFR. In other words, the sample citation refers to CFR 1.5 and it is the ninth document in the sequence.

- [Description of Document doc. 1.5:09]

Each essay begins with a brief introduction to set the stage for the topic. Each essay concludes with a summary and foreshadows the content of the next essay. The Institutional Report includes a Table of Contents at the beginning and a List of Acronyms in the Appendix.

## **ESSAY 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS: REVIEW UNDER THE WSCUC STANDARDS AND COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS; INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATOR**

In this essay, we describe the process through which CSU Bakersfield completed the Review under WSCUC Standards (RUWS) and the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI). The essay describes the process of self-study and broad, collaborative efforts of faculty, students and staff to comply with and exceed WSCUC standards. We also refer to the Federal Checklist necessary for successful reaffirmation. In sum, the evidence throughout this institutional report shows that CSU Bakersfield has numerous systems and structures for tracking, evaluating and improving learning for the students it serves.

### **2.1 REVIEW UNDER THE WSCUC STANDARDS (CFR 1.8)**

For CSU Bakersfield, the Review under WSCUC Standards was an opportunity for the University to reflect on its strengths and weaknesses and future direction, as the only four-year university within 100 miles in the southern San Joaquin Valley. As described in Essay 1, the reaffirmation and self-study process began with the formation of the WSCUC Steering Committee in November of 2016 [link [WSCUC Meetings](#)]. The Steering Committee also created and oversaw several subordinate WSCUC reaffirmation committees, including the WSCUC Workgroup, which collected documents, data and information pertaining to the WSCUC Standards and Criteria for Review (CFR), and the WSCUC Writing Teams [[Team Organizational Chart doc. 1.8:07](#)]. Over several months, the WSCUC Workgroups collected over 600 documents to reflect on as supporting evidence for CSU Bakersfield's compliance with WSCUC Standards. The Steering Committee then formed the Writing Teams to draft the essays for the Institutional Report. Together, the subordinate reaffirmation committees (with 58 members, including faculty and staff from all four of CSU Bakersfield's academic schools) are referred to as the "WSCUC All Team."

The Review under WSCUC Standards (RUWS) was used to plan for the Institutional Report. The Steering Committee finalized the distribution, analysis and refinement of the RUWS at the meeting on January 16, 2018 [link [WSCUC Meetings](#)]. At that meeting, the Committee approved the multi-step process of institutional self-study, detailed in the Reaffirmation 12-month Flowchart [[doc. 1.8:09](#)], and provided the RUWS to the WSCUC All Team. Each member of the WSCUC All Team had the opportunity to rate CSU Bakersfield's performance according to the RUWS over the course of two weeks, as shown in the Reaffirmation 12-month Workflow.

For each CFR, fifteen WSCUC All Team members rated CSU Bakersfield ("Reviewer Rating"). They also identified the importance of addressing each CFR as an aspect of the review ("Importance to Address"). These responses to the RUWS, referred to as "RUWS data," were compiled and analyzed in a spreadsheet, for ease of reporting, by members of the Steering Committee in the Office of Academic Programs [[RUWS data xls. 1.8:11](#)] (Note: Our in-house RUWS data spreadsheet is distinct from the federally required RUWS form [[doc. 1:8.17](#)]). In addition, the participating All Team members provided qualitative comments about CSU Bakersfield's self-assessment. On the RUWS data spreadsheet, results include the percentage response for each rating and qualitative comments, summarized in this section of the essay.

The primary analysis identified those CFRs with a low Reviewer Rating for “We do this well,” coupled with a high Importance to Address, or “High Priority” rating. For example, the analysis of CFR 1.1 indicated that 75% of the respondents saw that CSUB has an appropriate and clearly defined statement of purpose, or mission. One respondent wrote the following: “CSUB has a clear and appropriate institutional purpose, its educational objectives are aligned with that purpose, and it operates with integrity and autonomy.”

In another example, the RUWS spreadsheet shows that CFR 1.2, which relates to educational objectives being widely recognized throughout the institution, received just a 6% Reviewer Rating (“We do this well”) and a 38% Importance to Address rating. One of the respondents commented: “CSU Bakersfield does have this information readily available, but information is not always in a centralized location.” The respondents also saw the need to improve professional development resources for faculty and staff. In reference to CFR 3.3, respondents noted that, “The campus provides more training opportunities to faculty and staff.” Particularly, 3 of the 15 respondents (20%) indicated that CSU Bakersfield “Does this Well,” while 4 of the 15 respondents (25%) felt this item was a “High Priority.” In another area for improvement, the analysis showed that CFR 4.7 “institution considers changes ... in .. higher education,” should be addressed by CSU Bakersfield. Only 19% of the respondents indicated that CSU Bakersfield is achieving CFR 4.7 well, while 19% rated CFR 4.7 highly for Importance to Address. In reference to CFR 4.7, one respondent commented: “There needs to be systematic strategic planning throughout the university; some units do well; others not as well and some not at all.” The RUWS data spreadsheet provided a rich dataset in support of CSU Bakersfield’s self-study. The data was used to promote reflection and continuous improvement campus-wide.

The WSCUC All Team met on February 14, 2018, to discuss the RUWS dataset, as shown in the Reaffirmation 12-month Flowchart [[doc.1.8:09](#)]. This was a formative conversation among members of the WSCUC Steering Committee, the WSCUC Workgroups and the WSCUC Writing Teams. The 58 members of the WSCUC All Team, who had collected over 600 documents, were in the best position to recommend improvements to CSU Bakersfield. At the February meeting, participants were asked to complete a worksheet, called the CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry Worksheet, to organize their thoughts and provide qualitative feedback for the RUWS [[CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry Worksheet doc. 1.8:05](#)].

Based on worksheet responses at the February WSCUC All Team meeting, the CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry [[doc. 1.8:06](#)] were drafted. The CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry, not to be conflated with the WSCUC Lines of Inquiry, are a vital part of the institution’s self-study and were used to identify areas of improvement before the WSCUC Team visit. They both provide a summary of areas for improvement [[doc.1.8:06](#)] and a project plan to develop solutions [[doc. 1.8:06](#)]. The CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry comprise eight areas of institutional improvement to be addressed before the visiting team arrives on campus.

1. CSU Bakersfield recognizes the need to develop a better system for collecting data, analyzing results, and communicating findings related to each goal and objective in the strategic plan to the university community.

2. CSU Bakersfield will seek to improve organizational structures and data-generating practices to facilitate decision making in all matters within the context of the changing institutional and higher education landscape.
3. The institution will be able to provide, publicly, timely information about the University's finances; and share information regarding how financial resources are being managed in accordance with best business practices.
4. CSU Bakersfield will provide additional assessment workshops and training institutes to ensure that student learning outcomes are measured and that the findings are used to improve standards of performance across every department and program.
5. In preparation for its WASC review, CSU Bakersfield will continue to develop strategies for improving graduation rates by working with the Graduation Initiative Committee. The campus will also make public all data related to the graduation initiative including student learning.
6. CSU Bakersfield will strengthen its efforts to promote the success of all students, including international and transfer students. As a university that serves many transfer students, CSU Bakersfield will provide a smooth and seamless transition for transfer students.
7. During the next several months, CSU Bakersfield will close the loop on the program review cycle by completing outstanding MOUAPs.
8. CSU Bakersfield will intensify its efforts to promote and advertise faculty research and creative activities, including those scholarly activities that involve students as co-participants.

With the CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry in development, broad campus participation was sought in the self-study process. To that end, two WSCUC campus open forums were conducted and recorded. During each one, the face-to-face and live-stream audience was provided with the RUWS [link: [WSCUC RUWS Open Forums](#)].

The comments from the campus open forums were used to develop the final CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry, which formed the basis of a Project Plan [doc. 1.8:06]. The Project Plan guides CSU Bakersfield's continuous improvement throughout the self-study process, to address areas of concern while preparing for the visiting team over the next year. The CSUB Lines of Inquiry were provided to President Zelezny's cabinet and presented in detail to the Academic Senate [Academic Senate Minutes doc 1.7:12]. Overall, the CSU Bakersfield self-study process was a collaborative campus-wide journey that yielded the RUWS data spreadsheet, RUWS Federal Worksheet, the Lines of Inquiry and the Lines of Inquiry Project Plan.

## **2.2 INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS (CFR 1.8)**

CSU Bakersfield reviewed and finalized its Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) in 2016, in parallel with the institution's mid-cycle review. At CSU Bakersfield, the IEEI was coordinated through the Office of Institutional Research Planning and Assessment (IRPA). The assistant vice president for IRPA also serves as CSU Bakersfield's chief assessment officer, and oversees the council of school assessment coordinators. Individually and collectively, the school assessment coordinators encourage and coordinate assessment

activities within each of the four academic schools [link: [Assessment Coordinators Minutes](#)]. These activities include: ensuring each program has developed learning outcomes and that the outcomes are published and widely available, and supporting faculty in evaluating learning outcomes [[Sample Assessment Coordinators Responsibilities doc. 1.8:12](#)].

Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, the council of school assessment coordinators began developing the campus's IEEI for submission. The council worked closely with academic departments to collect information for the IEEI. In total, the IEEI shows that 100% of the 62 degree-granting programs listed have formal learning outcomes [[IEEI doc. 1.8:16](#)], available for review [link: [Department Assessment Webpage](#)]. Importantly, the departmental assessment webpage is password protected. The IEEI also indicates that 100% of the 62 degree-granting programs have published learning outcomes in the catalog [link: [CSU Bakersfield catalog](#)] and on each departmental assessment webpage. Also, the IEEI shows that 93% (58 of 62) of the degree-granting programs have been scheduled for program review as of 2011.

In addition, the IEEI summarizes department and school assessment reports over multiple years. As an example of how evidence is used to determine how graduates achieve learning outcomes, the Biology Department in 2015-2016 undertook an evaluation of the volume and depth of content that graduating seniors retained over the course of their years of study [[NSME Fall 2017 Assessment Report doc. 1.8:13](#)]. A prior analysis had indicated differences in student recall of content, based on "where students had taken their freshman-level coursework, with CSU Bakersfield students generally outperforming transfer students, particularly in botany-related topics." To further analyze this observation, the department assessed student content recall using a pretest-posttest design. The assessment instrument was administered to entering biology students in the 2000-level courses, then in the senior seminar. Though the final data was unavailable as of this writing, this evaluation of an outcome over several years demonstrates the biology department's commitment to using powerful methodologies to evaluate student learning at various stages of their matriculation and to consider the transfer student population in particular.

The IEEI also details how evidence gained about student learning is used by departments and programs. In one example from the IEEI, the Department of Counseling Psychology (CPSY) had been using an in-house comprehensive examination involving the successful analysis of case studies as an end-of-degree evaluation. However, analysis of the comprehensive exam data indicated that the in-house measure was not aligned with current program learning outcomes. Thus, the faculty "in the CPSY Program have recommended that the current exam be replaced with the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam. This exam better reflects the learning outcomes for the program. Further, it is nationally normed, so CSU Bakersfield scores can be compared to scores from other programs." By switching to a nationally normed instrument to better align with program outcomes, the CPSY faculty demonstrate a data-driven approach to improve evaluation of student learning [[IEEI doc. 1.8:16](#)].

In all, the IEEI is a summary of the consistent and deliberate work of CSU Bakersfield faculty to set rigorous student learning objectives. These objectives are widely shared with and disseminated among both students and faculty. Moreover, the faculty show the capacity, desire

and determination to evaluate student work according to those student learning outcomes. The evidence derived from these evaluations of student learning has been used to close the loop and ensure learning. Lastly, it is clear that nearly every program at CSU Bakersfield has been scheduled for program review.

### **2.3 FEDERAL CHECKLISTS**

CSU Bakersfield evaluated the four Federal Checklist items in July of 2018. In preparation for the team visit, CSU Bakersfield completed an initial review of compliance related to the Federal Checklist. The links to each item on the Federal Checklist are embedded in CSUB version [doc.1.8.25]. The document includes links to the following policies:

- Credit Hour and Program Length
- Marketing and Recruitment Policy
- Student Complaints Policy
- Transfer Credit Policy

### **2.4 CONCLUSIONS**

CSU Bakersfield has used its self-study process and the Review Under WSCUC Standards document to engage the entire community of students, faculty, administrators, and other stakeholders in a broad and deep review of compliance to the WSCUC standards of accreditation. The campus was engaged in the self-study process through numerous campus updates [link: [WSCUC Campus Updates](#)] and open forums.

From the WSCUC All Team meetings, the campus has developed its own CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry to foster coordinated improvement in advance of the WSCUC visit in the Fall of 2019. These CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry range from improving data collection and reporting and transparency of University budgeting and financial information, to promoting student success and closing the loop on program review. With this information in hand, the senior leadership is committed to addressing these CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry, while keeping the campus notified through the CSU Bakersfield Lines of Inquiry Project Plan. In Essay 3, the authors will elaborate on the meaning, quality and integrity of CSU Bakersfield's academic programs.

## **ESSAY 3 – DEGREE PROGRAMS: MEANING, QUALITY, AND INTEGRITY OF DEGREES (CFRS 1.2, 2.2 – 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3)**

This essay addresses the meaning, quality and integrity of the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees at CSU Bakersfield. The meaning of each degree is defined in terms of its alignment with the University's mission. The quality and integrity of the degree programs are demonstrated through our rigorous degree and course-approval processes, as well as the consistent evaluation of student learning outcomes at all levels. Further, CSU Bakersfield's curriculum and co-curricular structures support the development of our students on their path to graduation. This essay demonstrates how resources are deployed strategically to facilitate an academic experience of the highest quality, and to ensure that this experience meets the standards set by the Commission and the faculty of CSU Bakersfield.

### **3.1 THE MEANING OF DEGREES AT CSU Bakersfield (CFRs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.8)**

The meaning and value of a degree from CSU Bakersfield—whether undergraduate or graduate—arises from the campus commitment to bettering the lives of each student and improving our community and region. As mentioned above, CSU Bakersfield is the only four-year university within 100 miles. Its service area includes part of Los Angeles County (the Antelope Valley region, including the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale) as well as the counties of Inyo, Kern, Mono, and Tulare. In terms of square miles, CSU Bakersfield has one of the largest service areas in the CSU System. Kern County is home to over 900,000 people, and the population of the Antelope Valley region is over 500,000.

Working closely with local schools and community colleges, CSU Bakersfield provides access to higher education for a rapidly growing and increasingly at-risk population of low-income and first-generation students. Nearly a decade since the Great Recession ravaged California and the nation, the rate of local childhood poverty has increased each year since 2008 [[Kern County Report Card doc. 1.8:18](#)]. In fact, 32 percent of all children in Kern County were living below the federal poverty threshold in 2015. This level of economic hardship directly influences the type of student CSU Bakersfield serves. According to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, in the 2017 academic year, just 40 percent of elementary and secondary school students met or exceeded standards in English language arts, while only 27 percent met or exceeded standards in math [[link: CAASPP Results](#)].

By focusing on providing students with a well-rounded skill set, including strong foundational skills, ethics, appreciation of diversity, and interdisciplinary knowledge, CSU Bakersfield aims to develop the intellectual and personal potential of each student. By educating our students and collaborating with partners in the community, we also aim to improve the region's educational advancement, quality of life, and economic development.

#### **3.1.1 THE MEANING OF THE BACCLAUREATE DEGREE (CFRs 1.1, 1.4, 2.1 and 2.2a)**

The meaning of the baccalaureate degree at CSU Bakersfield must refer to the value the degree confers upon the recipient. Ultimately, that value is determined by shared expectations of what the student knows and is able to do by virtue of having earned the degree. On our

campus, expectations for graduates are most clearly demonstrated in the University Learning Outcomes (ULOs), in place since the spring of 2010 [[CSU Bakersfield ULOs doc. 2.2a.09](#)].

- Students will show critical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Students will be able to communicate orally and in writing.
- Students will demonstrate discipline-based knowledge and career-based-learning.
- Students will possess numerical literacy.
- Students will become engaged citizens.
- Students will develop a well-rounded skill set.

These ULOs, which specify the knowledge and abilities the CSU Bakersfield graduate is expected to demonstrate, are based on CSU Bakersfield's Mission Statement, which highlights the campus's focus on the betterment of each student through "a commitment to scholarship, diversity, service, global awareness, and life-long learning" [[CSU Bakersfield Mission doc. 1.4:03](#)]. Students are expected to reach these goals progressively over their entire course of study, typically 48 units of General Education (GE), a major course of study, and a minor or collection of elective classes, totaling 120 units. Their studies are supported by a variety of campus activities. Thus, the ULOs identify the knowledge and abilities our graduates acquire through their GE courses; disciplinary courses in their major and minor or elective choices; and their involvement in extra- and co-curricular activities. Each component of a baccalaureate degree has its own Student Learning Outcomes, directly mapped to the ULOs. The current GE program, implemented in 2016 and aligned with the ULOs, focuses on teaching and reinforcing foundational skills and achieving integrated knowledge across disciplines.

### **3.1.2 THE MEANING OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE (CFRs 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3)**

As a comprehensive public university, CSU Bakersfield is dedicated to offering excellent graduate and post-baccalaureate programs that advance student learning and support economic development in the service region. The University's commitment to these programs is embedded in our vision and value statements and University Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs (ULOGP) [[ULOGP doc. 2.3:16](#)]. Every post-baccalaureate degree program at CSU Bakersfield has developed learning objectives that align with the ULOGP, while the discipline-specific meaning of graduate degrees varies with the array of graduate programs offered.

- Students will demonstrate broad, integrative knowledge.
- Students will develop specialized knowledge.
- Students will practice intellectual skills such as analytic inquiry, use of information resources, engaging diverse perspectives, quantitative fluency, and communication fluency.
- Students will conduct applied learning.

The ULOGPs were developed following the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) which outlines what graduates at each degree level should know within the following areas: specialized knowledge; broad and integrative knowledge; intellectual skills; applied and collaborative learning; and global learning. The ULOGP presume the acquisition of literacies, breadth and subject-matter knowledge at the undergraduate level, to build upon that knowledge at the

master's and doctoral levels. For example, our ULOGP emphasize intellectual skills also articulated in our undergraduate curriculum, with the expectation that graduate students' proficiencies will demonstrate incremental challenge and cumulative accomplishment.

Our post-baccalaureate programs allow students to develop and demonstrate analytical skills, use of information resources, engagement with diverse perspectives, and quantitative and communication fluency that strengthen learning and deepen understanding. Our popular master's programs include business and public administration, nursing, social work, geological sciences, English, Spanish, education, and counseling. Overall, all our graduate programs are known for developing students' integrative and specialized knowledge. All graduate students engage in real-world, problem-solving experiences such as practicum, work, community, or research activities and are encouraged to apply the insights gained from field experiences to address the most pressing global, national, and regional issues of the times.

Our steadfast commitment to graduate programs has earned CSU Bakersfield national recognition by *The Washington Monthly* (2017) as one of the top ten master's-granting universities in the U.S. [Washington Monthly Ranking doc. [1.8.19](#)]. This ranking considers post-graduate earnings and net price for the degree. According to president Dr. Horace Mitchell, "This national recognition is a tribute to the passion and commitment of our faculty, staff, and administrators to excellence and the success of our students."

As a result of the rich, coherent, and challenging educational experiences CSU Bakersfield provides, our master's and doctoral graduates become leaders in their fields – researchers, teachers, mentors, policy makers, and entrepreneurs. The success of these graduates speaks eloquently to CSU Bakersfield's vision for providing a quality educational experience that transforms students and improves the quality of life in the region and beyond.

### **3.1.3 THE MEANING OF THE DEGREE IN INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS (CFR 2.3)**

The undergraduate degree programs at CSU Bakersfield provide students with breadth and depth of knowledge, preparing them to serve as educated citizens in Kern County, California, and the world. Led by a distinguished faculty, CSU Bakersfield programs lead to undergraduate BA and BS degrees, with these three components: 1) General Education or broad exposure to bases of knowledge; 2) study of one or more fields in greater depth, and 3) a minor or elective courses. CSU Bakersfield graduate programs, designed to meet important student and regional needs, culminate in the award of a master's or doctoral degree, an advanced teaching credential or a special post-baccalaureate or post-master's certificate. The meaning of a degree is indicated through development of clear and relevant student learning outcomes, crafted by the faculty, evaluated consistently, and refined continuously to foster student achievement. Statements of and links to student learning outcomes are made available and communicated to students and the public through the university catalog [[link: 2016-18 Catalog](#)], department websites, course syllabi and the CSU Bakersfield Program Assessment website [[link: Student Learning Outcome Statements](#)].

Student learning outcomes for each academic program—Program Learning Outcomes, (PLOs)—are mapped to ULOs. For example, the BA degree in Communication states as Goal 4

that “Students will develop a critical understanding of communication law.” This goal is supported by this learning outcome: “Students will explore, understand, and critically assess the knowledge of laws governing communication.” These goals and outcomes within the Communication degree map to the following University Learning Outcomes: 1A: Ability to read critically, 1B: Ability to write critically, 1D: Ability to think critically, 1F: Critical problem solving, 3A: Knowledge in the major discipline, and 3B: Ability to apply knowledge of discipline.

Beyond simple mapping, undergraduate PLOs are assessed through a variety of methods. For example, for the BS degree in kinesiology [link: [CSU Bakersfield Department Assessment](#)], the department expects students to be able to “Demonstrate knowledge of the biological and physical processes that inform our understanding of physical activity, nutrition and health.” To evaluate this outcome, the department embedded faculty-designed items into in-class examinations and found the following: “There were a total of 51 students that took the exam. Embedded questions labeled 1 and 2 were answered correctly by 90% of students. Questions 3, 4, and 5 were answered correctly by 83% of the students.” In closing the loop, the department determined that, while lectures prepare students to achieve the above outcome, introducing more frequent quizzes to confirm student achievement would improve student learning.

Graduate programs similarly ensure the quality and integrity of the degree through the careful development and assessment of student learning outcomes. For the graduate program in English, the department has set an outcome related to X-bar theory, a theory of syntactic relationships between two independent claims [link: [CSU Bakersfield Department Assessment](#)]: “Students will be able to accurately reveal the grammatical relationships of constituents in sentences using X-bar theory.” This outcome maps directly to the University Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs [ULOGP doc 2.3:16]: “Students elucidate the major theories, research methods and approaches to inquiry. Students perform analytic inquiry.” The English department evaluated student achievement of this outcome by developing a pre-test related to X-bar theory and its application, taken during the first week of class. Students were re-tested during the mid-term. In the 2016-2017 cycle, “The average score on the pretest was 53.7. The average score on the midterm exam was 92.9, a significant increase. On the midterm, students displayed not only knowledge of the conceptual framework of X-bar theory, but also how to apply the theory in treeing complex sentences to reveal their true constituent structure.”

Though CSU Bakersfield’s undergraduate and graduate programs assess the quality of degrees in different ways, the degrees are built with thoughtful and directed student learning outcomes used to measure student performance and encourage and support student achievement. Furthermore, the quality of each degree program is assessed annually by program faculty with the support of four school-based Faculty Assessment Coordinators (FACs). Department chairs and program coordinators summarize their assessment efforts in annual reports, which are submitted to school deans and utilized in the program review process.

### **3.1.4 THE MEANING OF THE DEGREE IN GENERAL EDUCATION (CFR 2.2A, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5)**

General Education (GE) is a vital component of the bachelor’s degree, and thus the meaning of the degree is largely connected to knowledge and skills expected of students who complete the

GE program. The AIMS (Achieving Integration & Mastering Skills) GE program was implemented in Fall of 2016. Designed to systematically improve student learning, it was the first GE program instituted on campus with learning outcomes and assessment at its core. Early in 2014, after the innovative program was approved by the Academic Senate [[link: Senate approval of GE](#)] and the campus president, faculty who taught courses in the various GE areas gathered to write the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each area. By the end of spring term, all of the SLOs for the GE program were in place, ready for courses to be submitted for approval. Then, the GE Assessment Coordinator consolidated the outcomes created for the various GE areas to develop GE Program Learning Outcomes [[link: GE Program Learning Outcomes](#)]. These expectations are organized around three goals.

- Students will attain competency in the skills that are foundational to a liberal arts education.
- Students will develop a well-rounded knowledge base across a broad range of disciplines.
- Students will develop the grounds for engaged citizenship.

In support of Goal 1, GE courses focus on practice and reinforcement of the Core Competencies: oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy. The first four foundational skills are introduced in Area A1-A4 courses, and reinforced in courses at the lower-division and upper-division levels [[link: GE Program Description](#)]. In support of Goal 2, students gain disciplinary knowledge through Area B, C, and D courses (B1: Physical Sciences, B2: Life Sciences, C1: Arts, C2: Humanities, and D: Social and Behavioral Sciences), and develop integrated knowledge across disciplines under three themes: Quality of Life, Revolutionary Ideas and Innovations, and Sustainability and Justice. Goal 3 focuses on developing engaged citizenship, including self-discovery and self-knowledge, the history and government of the US, and human diversity. This goal is supported by SELF (Student Enrichment and Lifelong Fulfillment) courses, American Institutions courses, and the Guidepost series (First-Year Seminar, Junior-Year Diversity and Reflection, and Senior Capstone) courses. All of these GE Program Learning Outcomes are mapped to the ULOs.

While the AIMS GE program is new, it is already improving the knowledge and skills developed by CSU Bakersfield graduates, and student learning in GE courses is tracked through systematic assessment. To help GE faculty ensure that students achieve the program's goals, the GE program offers frequent professional development opportunities to assist faculty in reinforcing the skills practiced in the Area A (foundational skills) classes. In addition, the GE Faculty Assessment Coordinator brings together teams of GE faculty from across the four academic schools to develop common tools, assess the quality of the GE program, and implement strategies for improving student learning.

### **3.2. THE MEANING OF THE DEGREE AND CO-CURRICULUM AT CSU BAKERSFIELD (CFRs 2.9 and 2.11)**

The division of Student Affairs leads co-curricular opportunities for students at CSU Bakersfield with a mission developed in 2016, and vetted widely by students, staff, and faculty:

The CSU Bakersfield Division of Student Affairs is dedicated to developing the intellectual and personal potential of every student by providing programs, services and co-curricular activities that are essential to student success. While serving students through meaningful experiences and enhancing the community united through diversity, we inspire students to become informed, active and engaged global citizens in a complex, rapidly changing world.

Thirteen units across the division provide these opportunities, each unit having an established mission [link: [Student Affairs Mission Statements](#)], along with advisory boards that include students, staff, faculty, and community members to provide guidance to departments.

Since 2012, the entire division of Student Affairs has engaged all staff members in day-long, themed, staff development retreats. Retreat themes have included: “Student Affairs, the Key to Student Success,” “Partnering with Faculty,” “Fun with FERPA,” and “Navigating Legal Issues.” In August 2016, staff training was expanded at the start of the academic year for all staff in the divisions of Student Affairs, Business Affairs, University Advancement, and the President’s Office. In August 2017, in a concerted effort to “reconsider” the overall philosophy and approach in supporting the CSU Bakersfield community, and to move away from a “deficits” culture to encourage a “strengths-based approach” to helping students, all 750 CSU Bakersfield staff were engaged in a full-day of “StrengthsQuest” training. This was the single largest training event ever conducted by the StrengthsQuest/Gallup Organization.

### **3.2.1 THE UNDERGRADUATE CO-CURRICULUM (CFRs 2.2a, 2.9 and 2.11)**

To provide a framework for engagement through a deliberate, considerate, and inclusive multi-year process [link: [Student Affairs Guiding Principles](#)], the division of Student Affairs facilitated the development of the CSU Bakersfield Guiding Principles. Assessment efforts in most Student Affairs units include program, activity, and service evaluations that measure student learning, growth, and development, guiding program planners to improve activities, enhance the CSU Bakersfield student experience, and promote student engagement and success. Overall, co-curricular activities and programs at CSU Bakersfield recognize and support academic success, develop students’ interpersonal and leadership skills, connect students with the campus and local community, and attend to the basic needs of a largely low-income student population.

Student Union and Organizational Governance is responsible for supporting the growth and development of recognized student organizations at CSU Bakersfield. Over 100 active organizations are categorized as academic, social, multicultural, religious, or political [link: [Runnersync club listing](#)]. These organizations provide rich opportunities for students to apply and develop academic skills and abilities, as well as valuable leadership, interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills. In order to be officially recognized, student organizations must have a faculty or staff member serve as the advisor. In most instances, the advisor becomes a mentor and an important resource to the student members.

Since 2012, the Campus Programming Office has rapidly expanded program offerings to engage students in fun, educational co-curricular activities that complement the academic mission of the University. An example is “Runner Nights” as a late-night alternative to social

activities with alcohol. These events allow students to enjoy carnival rides and games, along with the largest outdoor dance floor in Bakersfield.

Walter Stiern Library also supports student learning. To improve information literacy, a new curriculum has been developed using Credo InfoLit modules with the composition program. In July 2016, the CSU premiered a new Unified Library Management System (ULMS) for each library at its 23 campuses. This new discovery system allows for easier access and usability of the library's materials, including books, articles, media, government documents, and more, and gives CSU Bakersfield students access to millions of books from any CSU campus through CSU+. Stiern Library also provides library services to satellite and distance students, prioritizing electronic resources and providing students at Antelope Valley with a librarian onsite, to assist with research projects. Antelope Valley student also have access, via a courier, to print resources from the Stiern Library and can make requests via OneSearch or Resource Sharing.

Community and civic engagement closely align CSU Bakersfield with the greater Bakersfield Community. The Center for Career Education and Community Engagement (CECE) facilitates the inclusion of service learning and actively facilitates internships in the Bakersfield and Antelope Valley communities for students. CSU Bakersfield has been recognized nationally for its success in engaging with the community. In 2015, CSU Bakersfield received the prestigious Carnegie Classification of Community Engaged [Carnegie letter doc. 1.1:01]. The importance and effectiveness of CECE has also been acknowledged by the CSU Chancellor's Call to Service Grant Program. Funding from the CSU Chancellor has helped CECE maintain a high level of service and support for students in terms of career development and connections to the community.

### **3.2.2 THE GRADUATE CO-CURRICULUM (CFRs 2.2b, 2.9 and 2.11)**

Graduate students at CSU Bakersfield take advantage of numerous co-curricular opportunities to expand and augment their learning. The Graduate Student Center (GSC) sponsors a skill-building workshop series that supports student achievement of intended program and institutional outcomes. These workshops scaffold the entirety of the graduate co-curricular experience. Sample workshops include support for thesis development and defense, such as literature review writing [Literature Review Workshop doc. 2.11:01], using statistics effectively, and oral presentation skills, as well as financial competency, career preparation, and stress management [Stress Management Workshop doc. 2.11:03].

Graduate students also participate in a paid or unpaid internship with a local agency through CSU Bakersfield's Center for Career Education and Community Engagement (CECE). Many students serve as teaching assistants under the guidance of a mentor teacher or as research assistants with a faculty member on training grants funded by The National Science Foundation, The National Endowment for the Humanities, The US Department of Education, and The California Department of Food and Agriculture, to name a few. Research fellowships are also available through the Graduate Student Center [GSC Funded Research doc. 2.11:02].

A unique feature of CSU Bakersfield's graduate co-curriculum is the flagship Graduate Student Leadership (GSL) Program, a paid, cohort-based experience for first- and second-year master's

degree students. The GSL program provides participants with hands-on learning experiences in Student Affairs administration; supportive, and meaningful connections with peers and administrators; self-management, supervisory, and leadership skills; and marketable expertise.

### **3.2.3 THE CURRICULUM AT CSU BAKERSFIELD ANTELOPE VALLEY**

CSU Bakersfield is one University with two sites, one in Bakersfield and the other in Antelope Valley [link: [CSUB Antelope Valley](#)]. Though a smaller number of programs are offered in Antelope Valley, the degrees at both campuses are identical. All curriculum is decided at the departmental and school level, and there are no stand-alone departments at the Antelope Valley campus. All faculty who teach in AV are hired and evaluated as members of main campus department, report to the chair on the main campus, and participate in all departmental and school meetings. Typically, the same faculty member delivers a course on both campuses, choosing to teach at AV in person, through instructional television, or via an online course. Students from both campuses attend ITV courses and online courses.

Currently CSU Bakersfield Antelope Valley offers the following undergraduate programs: a BS in Business Administration, with optional concentrations in Accounting or Management; a BS in Nursing, RN to BSN; a BA in Child, Adolescent, & Family Studies; a BA in Criminal Justice; a BA in Sociology, with an optional concentration in Human Services; and a BA in Liberal Studies, with three optional tracks: Integrated Special Education Credential, Traditional Credential Track, or Integrated Multiple Subject Track (IBEST). The Antelope Valley campus also offers the following Master's degree programs: MBA; MA programs in Education Administration, Special Education, Curriculum and Instruction, or Administration; and Master of Social Work (MSW).

### **3.3 ENSURING THE QUALITY AND INTEGRITY OF UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEGREES (CFRs 1.2 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.9 and 2.11)**

At CSU Bakersfield, several processes support the quality and integrity of the undergraduate and graduate degrees. These include the procedures and guidelines for establishing new degree programs; reviewing and approving new courses and revisions to program curricula; annually assessing student learning outcomes; and conducting consistent and deliberate program review. In each case, the processes are governed by both campus and CSU policy. Details about the scope of CSU academic policy are on the Academic Programs and Faculty Development website [link: [CSU Academic Programs](#)]. Ensuring the quality of degree programs involve faculty and administration building, maintaining, updating, and delivering curricula, and evaluating the student learning outcomes that guide student achievement.

#### **3.3.1 APPROVING NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS (CFRs 1.7, 2.2, 4.1 and 4.3)**

As mentioned above, the integrity and quality of CSU Bakersfield's undergraduate and graduate programs is framed by policy at both the CSU Chancellor's Office and institutional levels. The current process for developing and approving new academic programs and revising existing programs is guided by the 1985 Chancellor's Office memorandum EP&R 85-20 [[1985 CO Memo doc. 2.2:21](#)] and subsequent policy developments. As shown in the CSU Degree Program Proposal Process Flowchart [link: [Process Flowchart](#)], the faculty of CSU Bakersfield

begin by conceptualizing new degree programs to serve different student populations within the service region. Faculty are encouraged to coordinate with the Office of Academic Programs during this first of three phases of new program development.

In the first phase, the Office of Academic Programs assist faculty by guiding them through the Academic Planning Manual [link: [Academic Planning Manual](#)], which contains most institutional guidelines and policies related to new program development and program modification. Faculty interested in developing new programs are asked to complete a Program Projection Form [Program Projection Form doc. 4.1:37], an initial prospectus for a new degree program. The completed Program Projection Form, which is used to alert the campus governance bodies (the Academic Senate, the provost's council, and the president's cabinet) that the faculty are considering a new program, is then vetted by the Academic Senate and its subcommittees as necessary. In the fall of 2017, for example, the Academic Senate approved Program Projection Forms for the 2017-18 academic year [AMP Senate Resolution doc. 1.7:11].

In the second phase, Program Projection Forms approved by the campus are forwarded to the Chancellor's Office for inclusion in the system-wide Academic Master Plan (AMP) [link: [CSU Academic Master Plan](#)], a list of potential new academic programs, both graduate and undergraduate. The AMP is then reviewed by the system-wide CSU. If the Board of Trustees approves a potential new program (as shown in the CSU Degree Program Proposal Process Flowchart), CSU Bakersfield can then begin to develop full degree proposals.

In the third phase of program approval, CSU Bakersfield faculty develop full degree proposals, with support from the Office of Academic Programs. The Chancellor's Office provides a variety of templates to support full degree proposal development [Degree Proposal Checklist doc. 4.3:25]. The full degree proposal is then vetted and approved by the respective academic department, school curriculum committee, and the Academic Senate.

Consistent with the Program Proposal Process Flowchart, CSU Bakersfield's full program proposal is then sent to the Chancellor's Office. The Chancellor's Office submits the proposal for external review to determine the viability of the proposed new degree program and its relation to both similar and dissimilar academic programs in the system. After the external review, a recommendation is made the Chancellor's Office staff to the Chancellor to either approve or deny the proposed program.

In developing new academic programs, CSU Bakersfield considers student and regional needs, as well as trends and developments in academic disciplines. For instance, local industry had long hoped that the campus would develop programs in engineering and agriculture, a desire underscored by the Community Stakeholders Report in 2008, which aggregated responses to a survey and focus group drawing on local businesses. By Fall 2011, despite historic budget cuts to the CSU, fourteen new academic programs were introduced, including BS degree programs in computer engineering; biology with a concentration in biotechnology; business administration with a concentration in agricultural business; and business administration with a concentration in supply chain logistics. An additional BS program in electrical engineering was introduced in 2012.

### **3.3.2 COURSE APPROVAL PROCESSES (CFRs 2.2, 4.1 and 4.2)**

To ensure the quality and integrity of program curricula, proposals for new and revised courses undergo a thorough approval process. Normally, there are three different pathways for approving new courses and revising existing courses. During the quarter-to-semester conversion (Q2S), an additional pathway was opened and existed for about a year.

All pathways begin with new course/course revision proposals developed and reviewed by a department or program, which are then sent to their school curriculum committee for review. School curriculum committees accept proposals in slightly different formats [[School Curriculum Forms doc. 2.2:22](#)], but each committee requests the same basic information: 1) a description of the proposed changes, including catalog copy; 2) a rationale for changes, including ties to learning outcomes, how the changes fit with the rest of the curriculum, and how the changes improve the curriculum; and 3) the impact of the proposed new course or revision on resources (e.g., equipment, faculty staffing). If the proposal is acceptable and a) does not involve the GE program or, b) does not have resource/curricular implications for other schools, the committee chair and dean sign the proposal and the review process ends. A signed Request for Approval New Course/Course Change form is sent to Academic Operations, where changes are made to the course catalog and PeopleSoft management system.

If the proposal for a new course/revision involves a GE course, the proposal receives an additional level of review by the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECCo), which assesses the course for compliance with GE requirements and GE Student Learning Outcomes (GE PLOs). Courses that require inter-school cooperation and oversight (e.g., required courses in interdisciplinary majors) are evaluated by the Academic Affairs Committee within the Academic Senate, after successful reviews by the relevant school curriculum committees [[link: University Handbook pg. 12](#)]. During the quarter-to-semester conversion, this Senate committee, also referred to as the Conversion Curriculum Committee, had the additional charge of approving or denying petitions for course unit exceptions.

### **3.3.3 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES (CFRs 2.6 and 2.7)**

Each undergraduate major and graduate program is expected to assess student achievement of at least one Program Learning Outcome (PLO) on an annual basis, with a goal of assessing all PLOs within a 5-year cycle. Similarly, at least two PLOs from CSU Bakersfield's GE program are assessed on an annual basis, with the goal of assessing all ten PLO's within a 5-year cycle [[link: GE Assessment Cycle](#)]. CSU Bakersfield harnesses these assessment results and planned actions to improve student learning. In addition, department chairs are expected to summarize and reflect upon their program's progress through the assessment cycle in each program's annual report [[link: Department Assessment](#)].

Annual assessment is overseen by a team of Faculty Assessment Coordinators (FACs), one for each of the four academic schools, one for the GE program, and one for Extended University, with additional members from Student Affairs and the Office for Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA). The school and GE FACs provide assessment support to the faculty in the form of workshops, attendance at department or program meetings, and one-on-one

interactions [[link: Culture of Assessment](#)]. The FACs support faculty with assessment processes (i.e., developing assessment plans, choosing and developing appropriate assessment tools, collecting and analyzing evidence of student learning, and closing the loop). The FACs also provide summative descriptions of the assessment activities within their school and GE in an annual report [[link: Assessment Status Report](#)].

Through the annual assessment process, all faculty members examine aggregate evidence of student learning and consider its implications for curricular design, pedagogy, and student support. Essay 4 describes what annual assessment has revealed about student learning at CSU Bakersfield and, thus, the meaning, quality, and integrity of our degrees as reflected in learning outcomes. Essay 6 describes how annual assessment is used in the program review process, including the allocation of resources and program planning, and shaping curricular changes to support student achievement of faculty-established expectations.

### **3.3.4 PROGRAM REVIEW (CFRs 2.6 and 2.7)**

Periodic program review at CSU Bakersfield is a faculty-driven process in which evidence-based claims are used to assess and ensure the quality, meaning, and integrity of the University's degree programs [[Program Review Charge doc. 2.7:24](#)]. The University Program Review Committee (UPRC) is comprised of eight members, including faculty elected to represent each of the four schools, two at-large faculty members, one member of the Academic Senate selected by the executive committee and, as a non-voting member, the ex-officio designee from the office of the associate vice president for academic programs [[link: Program Review Cmte](#)]. All undergraduate and graduate programs, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programs, and externally accredited programs, as well as the General Education program and the Helen Louise Hawk Honors program, are subject to program review at CSU Bakersfield following a seven-year schedule outlined in the University Academic Master Plan (AMP). (Accredited programs' review schedule is adjusted to match their accreditation schedule.) The AMP is updated every year and submitted to the CSU Chancellor's Office for review and approval, thereby ensuring that program review remains a transparent and accountable process [[link: CSU Academic Master Plan](#)].

CSU Bakersfield Academic Senate policy notes that program review "provides a critical reflection of who we are, where we are going, where we should be going, and how we should get there. It involves a program's commitment and willingness to candidly evaluate goals, objectives, and activities, through outcomes-based assessment of student learning. Consequently, ever improving decisions on curriculum and budgeting of scarce resources are made when faculty use program review data to inform the decision-making process" [[UPRC Policy and Procedures doc. 2.7:20](#)]. Sequentially, the required elements of a program review are (1) the self-study that includes, among other indicators, an examination by the program faculty of the program's data profile, prepared by the office of Institutional Research, Planning, and assessment (IRPA) [[Public Administration Profile doc. 2.7:19](#)]; (2) an external review; (3) the UPRC report; (4) the provost's review; and (5) a Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan, also known as a MOUAP [[Progress Toward MOAUP ppt. 2.7:25](#)].

To prepare for program review, a program is required to form a committee of at least three members who, in consultation with program faculty and representative students, writes a Self-Study report which is reviewed and approved by the entire program faculty. In December or January, the associate vice president for academic programs designee communicates with all the programs scheduled for review the following academic year, with the review schedule and submission dates. At the same time, authors of the self-study are invited to a workshop to receive guidance on developing the report and future action plan [[UPRC Workshop doc. 2.7:25](#)]. Each program is provided with a packet containing the review guidelines [[link: Program Preview Template](#)]; all responses to the previous program review; and additional information, such as model examples of reports. The title page of the program review document must indicate when the program faculty approved the Self-Study and the Program Plan. Three self-study reports included with this report demonstrate the rigor and reflection embodied in this process, one from an externally accredited program [[Chemistry/Biochemistry self-study doc. 2.7:06](#)], another from an undergraduate and graduate program [[Sociology self-study doc. 2.7:23](#)], and one from an undergraduate program with concentrations [[Philosophy self-study doc. 2.7:17](#)].

The external review of the program provides additional analysis and evidence of degree quality, meaning, and integrity. Typically, the program recommends available and well-qualified external reviewers to the associate vice president for academic programs and the dean of the respective school. The provost and vice president for Academic Affairs maintains a fund to pay for the external reviewer, who provides a new, comparative, and broader perspective on the program, its last seven years of operation, and its plans for the next seven years [[Program Review External Reviewer Report doc. 2.7:12](#)]. The external reviewer's report includes comments and recommendations regarding the program and may be used by the dean to assess degree alignment with the discipline, the academic school and the university.

The UPRC examines the self-study, external reviewer's report, the dean's response, and all other documents developed during the review. Two sample response letters from the UPRC, attached to this report, illustrate how the committee reflects on the quality of the degree, including student learning outcomes, retention, and success; curriculum relevance and relationship to best practices and trends in the field; faculty productivity; and community engagement and service [[Criminal Justice UPRC response letter doc. 2.7:07](#)]. In addition, the UPRC assesses program viability and sustainability by analyzing student enrollment trends; faculty and financial resource utilization; and the seven-year plan that anticipates curriculum modifications and resource needs to impact program effectiveness. The UPRC reviews the program's response to previous recommendations and its alignment with the university's mission and vision. Thus, a mandatory dimension of the self-study and the UPRC report is the program's engagement in a continuous cycle of quality improvement.

The provost and vice president for Academic Affairs' review is the final step in the assessment of degree quality, meaning, and integrity. The provost meets with the program coordinator, the chair of the UPRC, and other individuals with roles in the resource allocation and planning process (e.g., the department chair and school dean) to discuss the program review and recommendations. The provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, through active negotiation with the program faculty and appropriate school dean, prepares a Memorandum of

Understanding and Action Plan (MOUAP) for allocation of resources and recommendations to be implemented, as well as the resources to be provided to support those recommendations during the next seven years [MOUAP examples doc. [2.7:03](#), [2.7:16](#), [2.7:18](#)]. The concluding MOUAP is distributed to the Academic Senate, the appropriate school dean, the chair of the UPRC, and the chair of the program self-study committee. In this way, the results of program review provide a transparent and evidence-based foundation for assessing degree quality, developing a forward-looking plan, and managing resource allocation.

### **3.4 CONCLUSIONS**

As shown throughout Essay 3, CSU Bakersfield has thoughtfully developed academic degree programs, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, which possess meaning, quality, and integrity. The meaning of CSU Bakersfield degrees is directly related to the university's mission as a regional comprehensive university that serves the southern San Joaquin Valley. As faculty deliver instruction and develop new academic programs, the institutional focus is on the underserved population that constitutes the CSU Bakersfield student body. The academic programs are continually developing to lift this population intellectually, socially, and economically. Particularly, the development of the new GE program, with its emphasis on practicing and reinforcing foundational skills, and its interdisciplinary thematic emphases on Quality of Life, Revolutionary Ideas and Innovations, and Sustainability and Justice was designed to impart deeper meaning to the CSU Bakersfield degree. In addition, CSU Bakersfield's graduate programs, developed under the Degree Qualifications Profile, have been shown to increase the socio-economic standing of graduate students.

The quality and integrity of CSU Bakersfield's academic programs are demonstrated through the processes of new program creation at both the institutional and system levels. These processes ensure that new and existing programs are supported by thoughtful student learning outcomes. Moreover, the programs are reviewed through an extensive program review process that dovetails with CSU Bakersfield's strategic and resource allocation processes. Essay 4 elaborates further on the quality of degrees awarded by CSU Bakersfield.

## **ESSAY 4 – EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: STUDENT LEARNING, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE AT GRADUATION (CFR 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3)**

This essay expands upon the discussion of the meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree from Essay 3. It examines standards of performance for undergraduate and graduate programs at CSU Bakersfield, student learning achievement at both levels, and the role of assessment and program review in ensuring quality educational programs. At the undergraduate level, evidence of student achievement in the majors is considered for each of the four schools (Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education), and with respect to the five WSCUC Core Competencies (oral communication; written communication; critical thinking; quantitative reasoning; and information literacy). At the graduate level, evidence of student achievement of the University Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs (ULOGPs) is considered, following the university's framework for knowledge and skills acquisition at the graduate level. For all degree levels, detail is provided on how faculty members apply assessment findings to improve teaching effectiveness and program quality. This essay concludes with a review of insights into student learning at CSU Bakersfield and future plans for continued improvement.

### **4.1 UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION**

#### **4.1.1 STUDENT LEARNING IN THE MAJORS (CFRs 2.2a-b, 2.4, 2.6, and 2.6)**

Student learning standards for each of CSU Bakersfield's academic programs are developed by faculty and articulated in each major's program learning outcomes (PLOs), which are aligned with CSU Bakersfield's University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) and widely shared among faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders in the online university catalog [link: [2016-18 Catalog](#)] and a dedicated institutional webpage [link: [CSU Bakersfield Assessment Webpage](#)]. Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each course, aligned with the PLOs, are also shared with students on course syllabi. Student achievement of PLOs is assessed at the rate of at least one per year, with the goal of assessing all PLOs within a five-year period. Assessment plans, findings, action plans, and status updates for each program are annually reported in TaskStream, CSU Bakersfield's Assessment Management System (AMS) [link: [Department Assessment Webpage](#)]. Annual assessment results and subsequent plans for improvements to student learning are comprehensively considered during the program review process (see Essays 3 and 6 for further details on program review).

Assessment of student learning in the majors is conducted by faculty in the various programs and departments at CSU Bakersfield. Course-level assessment is coordinated at the program level by department chairs or program directors. The resulting data is shared and integrated at the school level by each school's assessment coordinator. Schools, and programs within schools, use this information to identify gaps in student learning, and to make changes consistent with each program's mission, instructional goals, and learning objectives. The assessment data, and associated plans to improve student learning, are included in annual reports, periodic program review reports, and, where appropriate, accreditation reports. The University Program Review Committee (UPRC) functions as a campus-level internal accreditation body to ensure that programs perform assessment and that programs make

appropriate changes based on assessment data. This information then flows to the provost [[Assessment Flowchart doc. 2.6:01](#)].

In the fall term of 2016, CSU Bakersfield shifted from a quarter to a semester system. In the two years preceding the quarter-to-semester (Q2S) conversion, academic programs reviewed their curriculum, including their PLOs and, when needed, revised the curriculum in response to results from previous assessment cycles. While some programs simply converted their existing curriculum from quarter to semester units, nearly 90% of all programs made significant, transformational changes to their curricula [[Q2S Curriculum Revision Process doc. 2.2:16](#)]. These curricular changes were reviewed by school curriculum committees prior to final approval by the school deans.

Each undergraduate program has specific learning outcomes that are regularly measured and assessed to improve teaching effectiveness and program quality. Faculty also adjust the assessment process itself when necessary, to improve the quality of data collected. To publicize CSU Bakersfield faculty's engagement in the assessment process and their use of assessment data to improve pedagogy, programs, and services, as well as to share ideas, tips, and best practices in the field, the University now publishes an assessment newsletter, *Context & Meaning*<sup>1</sup> [[doc. 2.6:02](#) and [2.6:03](#)]. The newsletter features examples of individual programs' use of assessment data to improve student learning by, for example, making changes within an individual course, adjusting skill development interventions across courses within the same program, and adding additional coursework to program requirements. All of these changes are driven by faculty.

An example of changes to an individual course, in response to assessment results, comes from the School of Arts and Humanities (A&H). Faculty in the Department of Art and Art History focused their 2014-15 assessment efforts on PLO 3.1, (Graduate is able to write about his/her own work within the contexts of art criticism, art history, and art theory). They previously found that senior theses in a capstone course showed a need for improvement in writing. Accordingly, faculty made three curricular changes: "(1) in keeping with the standard for working artists, students ... reduce[d] their 3-5 page thesis into a 1-page artist statement, (2) multiple faculty members served as guest artists to critique student work ... and (3) a faculty member with a background in writing was added as a co-instructor to the ... capstone course." After the changes, "only 1 student fail[ed] to meet the benchmark designated by the faculty, and nearly half of graduating seniors exceed[ed] the benchmark."

An example of adjustments to intervene in skill development across courses within a program, in response to assessment results, comes from the School of Business and Public Administration (BPA). First the program "refine[d] and decrease[d] the set of learning goals and objectives." Due to findings that "MyWritingLab Plus (MWL Plus) was being used at random

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<sup>1</sup> The first issue of *Context & Meaning* was published in Fall 2016 by the Office for Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment. Most of the articles are written by the school assessment coordinators and the GE assessment coordinator. Articles have also been contributed by the provost, the assistant vice president for Institutional Research Planning and Assessment; the associate vice president for Student Affairs; a research associate for Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment; and the dean of Business and Public Administration.

throughout BPA and students were ... experience[ing] MWL Plus fatigue,” the use of MWL Plus with writing assignments was placed in select core courses to increase motivation to use the program and improve student writing. As a result, “students’ MWL Plus Mastery scores increased between their sophomore and senior years.”

An example of adding coursework to a program’s requirements, in response to assessment results, comes from the School of Natural Science, Mathematics, and Engineering (NSME). The primary function of the program is to train high school science teachers. The California Subject Exams for Teachers (CSET) in science, required by the State of California, “serve as the primary assessment instrument for this program.” While CSU Bakersfield students were passing the general science and disciplinary exams at rates “above or comparable to that of other CSU Bakersfield STEM majors and the statewide average, ... the passage rate for the disciplinary exams was lower than that for the general science exams.” Accordingly, in tandem with the quarter-to-semester conversion, faculty “add[ed] ... required coursework to each of the disciplinary concentrations. The faculty plans to make a pre-post comparison in 4-6 years to assess the effectiveness of these changes.”

Finally, an example of changes to the assessment process itself comes from the School of Education and Social Sciences (SSE). Teacher Education archives of assessment data had previously “filled an entire room in the Education Building,” as the field takes “State and Federal accreditation” extremely seriously, with requirements often to assess “all ... [program] goals and outcomes either annually or biannually. Several departments have between 20 to 30 goals and outcomes ... including dispositional data on students, unit operation surveys for the faculty, signature assignments, rubrics, 5-year trends for signature assignments, exit surveys, and alumni surveys.” Education faculty and staff collaborated to create “a new institutional data collection structure was developed to streamline the process of collecting the data, generating reports, and evaluating whether ... students meet the expectations of the outside agencies.” One helpful innovation has been faculty’s adoption of LiveText “for their credentialing accreditation reporting and TaskStream for WSCUC-related assessment reporting” as well as scheduling an “annual summer retreat to evaluate the collected data and to discuss future improvements to ... programs.” Encouragingly, “these changes to the assessment process led to an “Outstanding” report from the Accreditation agency in 2016, an official designation that is rare in the CSU.”

Overall, the most recent years of data indicate that faculty find most students to be proficient in the skills and knowledge expected of them. For the 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 assessment cycles, faculty report that students met or exceeded expectations at rates of 68%, 59%, and 79%, respectively [Target Achievement Reports 2.6:[41](#),[42](#),[43](#)]. Similarly, students report they have gained the skills and knowledge expected. In the AY 2014-15 and 2015-16 Graduating Student Survey, more than half of all students indicated that they were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with their experience at CSU Bakersfield, and in AY 2016-17, more than three-fourths of all students indicated that they were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with their experience at CSU Bakersfield [Graduating Student Surveys 2.6:[38](#),[39](#),[40](#)]. For all three years of data, students reported the highest level of proficiency for knowledge of major and ability to work independently.

Although the average responses did not drop below the proficient mark, student responses indicate areas most in need of improvement are: numerical/quantitative literacy and social/civic/political awareness. In response, many programs used the Q2S conversion process to incorporate service and experiential learning into their curriculum, and the GE program was revised to include the intentional reinforcement of quantitative reasoning skills at the upper-division level and demonstration of quantitative reasoning proficiency by graduation. The next section offers details on the new GE program, focusing on areas of strength and weakness relevant to the WSCUC Core Competencies.

#### **4.1.2 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OF THE WSCUC CORE COMPETENCIES (CFRs 2.2a-b, 2.4, 2.6 and 4.3)**

The WSCUC Core Competencies of oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy have played an important role in the campus undergraduate curriculum since our last accreditation review. CSU Bakersfield's University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) reference all five of the WSCUC Core Competencies. The six learning objectives associated with ULO Goal I are focused on critical thinking, and also address written and oral communication; the four learning objectives associated with ULO Goal II address written and oral communication and information literacy; and the three learning objectives associated with Goal IV focus on quantitative reasoning [[2.2a: 08](#)]. These ULOs are widely shared among faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders in the university catalog [[link: 2016-18 Catalog](#)] and online [[link: CSU Bakersfield Assessment Webpage](#)].

Prior to fall 2016, the GE program was primarily responsible for teaching the Core Competencies, with reinforcement of writing skills mandated for three upper-division area breadth courses covering the natural sciences and technology, arts and humanities, and social and behavioral sciences (Theme 1, Theme 2, and Theme 3, respectively). In these courses, students were required to write at least one substantial research paper or other relevant discipline-specific, in-depth paper, to ensure upper-division practice of the writing skills learned at the lower-division level, along with some training in information literacy and reinforcement of critical thinking, especially if students had to support a thesis in a substantial research paper.

Aside from this reinforcement of the Core Competencies, it was expected that the major courses would also provide practice in writing, research, and critical thinking. Quantitative reasoning reinforcement occurred unevenly. Perhaps some quantitative reasoning reinforcement would take place in those same GE areas of natural sciences and technology (Theme 1) and social and behavioral sciences (Theme 3), but students majoring in these areas would, in their major courses, typically benefit much more from reinforcement of their quantitative reasoning skills (and advanced instruction) than students majoring in arts and humanities disciplines.

With the former GE program, then, reinforcement of the Core Competencies was somewhat uneven. The Community Stakeholders Report, which aggregated responses to a survey and summaries of focus group discussions in 2008, showed that community stakeholders generally had a very positive view of CSU Bakersfield students, but only 63% to 79% rated student preparation for critical reasoning, problem solving, and written and oral communication as satisfactory or better. These findings influenced the development of a new General Education

program, implemented in fall 2016: Achieving Integration & Mastering Skills (AIMS). The program demonstrates a stronger commitment to the teaching and reinforcement of the Core Competencies, with GE Program Learning Outcomes (GE PLOs) that prominently feature the WSCUC Core Competencies: the five learning outcomes associated with Goal 1 reference oral and written communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy [[2.2a:03](#)].

Moreover, the AIMS program embodies a campus commitment to a much more robust, structured approach not only to Core Competencies instruction, but also to the intentional reinforcement of those vital skills in both lower- and upper-division GE courses. First, students must meet the Area A requirements of the AIMS program, including instruction in four foundational skills: oral communication (A1), written communication (A2), critical thinking (A3), and quantitative reasoning (A4). Second, thematic lower-division courses must reinforce at least one of these foundational skills, using techniques such as scaffolded assignments combined with substantive, developmental feedback given to each student. Third, each of the Area upper-division courses must intentionally reinforce two of the foundational skills—UD B (Natural Sciences) must reinforce quantitative reasoning and one other skill; UD C (Arts and Humanities) and UD D (Behavioral and Social Sciences) must reinforce critical thinking and one other skill. Fourth, other GE courses also require intentional reinforcement of particular skills. Junior-Year Diversity and Reflection (JYDR) and American Institutions-History (AI-H) reinforce written communication; American Institutions-Government (AI-G) reinforces critical thinking; and the senior Capstone course reinforces oral communication.

Instruction in the new GE AIMS program is now both more consistent and broadly standardized. Consistency is heightened among courses that meet the same course-level learning outcomes, even when offered by different departments and instructors, because each course approved for GE has gone through a review process. In this process, a master course syllabus or outline is created to guide individual instructors. Prior to approval by the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECCo), courses must demonstrate exactly how they meet the course-level learning outcomes and GE course requirements. If they cannot, they are not approved. In this way, course instruction across the campus is now significantly more consistent. The teaching of foundational skills in the AIMS program is also now standardized, since instructors are required to meet in learning communities to share best practices and other innovations with colleagues teaching the same skill. Students are likely to have a similar learning experience in GE courses, regardless of the department that offers the approved course, and regardless of the instructor.

To prepare for the launching of the AIMS program, a GE Faculty Assessment Coordinator (GE FAC) position was created and filled in 2014. The GE FAC attended the WASC Assessment Leadership Academy in 2014 and focused her work on the development of a comprehensive assessment plan for the AIMS program [[GE Assessment Report doc. 2.6:19](#)]. During the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years, four critical tasks were accomplished. First, five teams of faculty attended WASC Core Competency educational programs [[doc. 2.6:18](#) and [ppt. 2.6:17](#)]. Each team was composed of at least three individuals, such as the GE Faculty Director, the GE Faculty Assessment Coordinator (GE FAC), the GE Learning Community Facilitators (GE LCFs), members of the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECCo), an instructional

librarian, and the campus Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Second, GE Program Learning Outcomes (GE PLOs) were developed and approved by GECCo [doc. 2.6:18]. These GE PLOs were mapped to the ULOs and a curriculum map of all approved GE courses were mapped to the GE PLOs [ppt. 2.6:15]. Third, an assessment of four of the Core Competencies—oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning—was completed to set a baseline for assessing the AIMS program [doc. 2.6:18]. These assessments took place in upper-division courses “at or near the time of graduation.” The oral communication SLOs were assessed in senior seminar courses; written communication was assessed through the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) exam; critical thinking was assessed in upper-division Theme 2 and Theme 3 courses and the GWAR exam; and quantitative reasoning was assessed in Theme 1 courses [doc. 2.4:08]. Fourth, a five-year assessment plan was developed to measure at least two GE PLOs per year [ppt. 2.6:17]. Oral communication will again be assessed in 2020-21 in the GE Capstone courses; written communication will be assessed in 2018-19 through the GWAR exam and in JYDR courses; critical thinking will be assessed in 2018-19 through the GWAR exam and in 2019-20 in UD C and UD D courses; and quantitative reasoning will next be assessed in 2019-20 in the UD B courses.

The results of the baseline assessment study completed in 2015-16 indicate that CSU Bakersfield students are most successful at meeting the performance standards associated with written communication: 70% met or exceeded expectations for developing ideas using effective examples and/or evidence; and 79% met or exceeded expectations for coherently organizing ideas [link: [GE Assessment AY 2015-16](#)]. This relatively high level of achievement of written communication skills is particularly remarkable, given the low level of preparation for college among our predominantly low-income student population that includes many English language learners. These results also demonstrate the effectiveness of the composition program at CSU Bakersfield, which includes a Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum workshop for faculty on an annual basis, and the use of MyWritingLab Plus in courses throughout the curriculum.

Student achievement of the performance standards associated with oral communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning was more troubling. With regard to oral communication, 55% of artifacts in the sample met or exceeded expectations for organization, 54% met or exceeded expectations for use of supporting material, 39% met or exceeded expectations for delivery, and 57% met or exceeded expectations for language choice [link: [GE Assessment AY 2015-16](#)]. With respect to critical thinking, 60% of artifacts in the sample met or exceeded expectations for argument construction, while results for argument analysis widely varied depending on the prompt—from 15% meeting or exceeding expectations to 75% meeting or exceeding expectations—and results for argument evaluation varying from 20% to 38% meeting or exceeding expectations. With respect to quantitative reasoning, results also varied depending on the prompt: 75% to 88% met expectations for calculation/estimation; 25% to 91% met expectations for quantitative reasoning; and 19% to 88% met expectations for application of quantitative reasoning skills. Baseline data for information literacy was collected in 2017-18 in the first-year seminar and senior capstone courses and has not yet been analyzed. We hope that our newly focused attention on the intentional cultivation of the Core Competencies throughout the AIMS program will improve student achievement of our expectations.

Because our new GE program was implemented recently, evidence is lacking about the extent to which the AIMS program has improved student achievement of the WSCUC Core Competencies. However, assessment planning began even before the actual courses were approved for the program. For example, each area of GE has course-level student learning outcomes and course requirements put into place only after extensive consultation with faculty who taught in those areas prior to the new GE program. For example, all faculty who taught pre-fall 2016 critical thinking courses were invited in the spring of 2014 to gather with colleagues. Such meetings typically began with discussions around what faculty expected students to be able to do when they successfully completed a course in a particular GE area. Notes from the discussion were distributed to all instructors who taught in that area, and at a second meeting, amendments and changes were brought forward and discussed. As a result, before the call for new GE courses went out, each area had developed SLOs and requirements, which formed the primary criteria for determining whether a particular course was approved for the new GE program. Moreover, a GE Summer Institute was held August 17-20, 2015, to orient faculty to the new expectations regarding the reinforcement of the Core Competencies throughout the AIMS curriculum. Approximately 120 faculty members participated in at least one of the eight sessions offered during the four-day event [[GE Assessment Cycle doc.2.6:16](#)].

In the meantime, the University has implemented a robust structure for responding to annual assessment results. For example, professional development opportunities are regularly offered to assist faculty in improving instruction, including Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum workshops and faculty learning community workshops focused on teaching the Core Competencies. We are also piloting several interventions to improve student learning outcomes, such as supplemental instruction for critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. Finally, several GE faculty members are piloting the use of ePortfolios, to both collect artifacts of student work and give students the opportunity to reflect on their learning achievement in the AIMS program.

#### **4.1.3 UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING (CFRs 2.2a-b, 2.4 and 4.3)**

In the preceding sections, we have discussed evidence of student achievement in majors for each of the four schools—Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education—as well as student achievement with respect to the WSCUC Core Competencies of oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy through the GE program. Our strengths include a culture of assessment throughout all undergraduate academic programs and a new emphasis on the concerted cultivation of the WSCUC Core Competencies through the AIMS program. Every degree program has developed and made public their program learning outcomes, mapped their PLOs to the University Learning Outcomes, and mapped their course offerings to their PLOs. The majority of degree programs are engaged in annual assessment to both ascertain student achievement of learning outcomes and to improve their programs based upon that data. Further, the structure of the new GE program supports collaboration among faculty across campus to improve student learning of the Core Competencies both within the GE program and in the various majors.

Moving forward, the University must not only maintain a campus-wide culture of assessment, with all academic programs annually conducting assessment and widely sharing teaching innovations. CSU Bakersfield must also publicize the success stories about how assessment has improved student learning and program development. In addition, the results of upcoming assessments of the Core Competencies through the GE program must be examined to ensure that student learning is meeting expectations, and continues to improve, particularly with regard to oral communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy.

#### **4.2 GRADUATE STUDENT LEARNING (CFRs 2.2a-b, 2.4 and 4.3)**

Essay 3 described how students graduating from CSU Bakersfield with a masters or EdD degree will possess the knowledge and skills identified in the four University Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs [ULOGP doc. 2.3:16], which define, in broad terms, minimum expectations for all graduate students, while every program establishes the desired level of competency for each goal depending on its place in the program's learning objectives. Students acquire these proficiencies through diverse curricular and co-curricular strategies developed by each program. Program learning outcomes are developed to align with the ULOGP, the University's framework for knowledge and skills acquisition at the graduate level. In this section, evidence is provided of graduate student learning, drawn from assessment results for select graduate programs. However, every graduate program has program-specific learning outcomes that are regularly measured and assessed to improve teaching effectiveness and program quality.

The Degree Qualifications Profile advocates infusing integrative knowledge throughout a student's education, not limited to the first two years of the undergraduate curriculum [DQP doc. 2.6:30]. Accordingly, the first ULO for all graduate students at CSU Bakersfield is to demonstrate how their field of study has developed with regards to other disciplines. Students should also be able to articulate the 'significance and implications' of their specialized work within a social and global context. Several graduate programs have incorporated this goal into learning objectives for all students in their disciplines. For example, the MA program in Curriculum and Instruction aspires to create a teacher-leader who, "shares information with colleagues within and/or beyond the district regarding how local, state and national trends and policies can impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning" [2.2b:04]. Similarly, a learning objective for MS Nursing students is to "expand knowledge and evaluate nursing theories and theories from related disciplines as a basis for advanced roles and nursing practice" [2.2b:03]. Student learning related to this learning outcome is regularly assessed through direct and indirect measures in several of CSU Bakersfield's graduate programs.

All CSU Bakersfield graduate students are also expected to develop specialized knowledge in their area of study. For instance, the graduate program in English has developed learning outcomes for its students in three subject specific areas of specializations: linguistics, composition, and literature. In 2014-15, the program assessed students' ability to apply critical theory in the analysis of a literary text, a literature learning outcome. The results indicated that the core course in Criticism added significant value to the students' learning experience. The faculty's reflection at the end of the assessment cycle underscore their abiding commitment to

student learning: “My goal in this course is arrive at a set of theoretical readings that is simultaneously challenging, up-to-date, and suited to most students’ tastes.... this fall 2014’s readings were the most enthusiastically received by far ... continuing to change the reading set along the lines of the last adjustments will undoubtedly further enhance student success and engagement in the class” [link: [Department Assessment](#)]. This pattern is repeated in several assessment cycles in the English department for other learning outcomes, highlighting how one graduate program cultivates student success through active student engagement.

Graduate programs at CSU Bakersfield have developed program-level learning outcomes that require students to demonstrate advanced intellectual skills, such as analytic inquiry, use of information resources, engagement of diverse perspectives, and quantitative and communication fluency. The graduate program in Administration, for example, measures several of these intellectual skills using students’ competency portfolios. Assessment results indicated that 75 % of students met the target level of competency, while 25% exceeded the target. This is a result of faculty providing intentional support to help students achieve learning outcomes. They provided students guidance on how to: “(1) select a project topic of interest; (2) write a one-page synopsis to explain their interest in [it]; (3) write a three-page project proposal to present some preliminary findings and elaborate on expected project outcomes, and cite several resources; (4) submit a draft to first and second readers for comments and suggestions [...]; (5) revise the draft accordingly [...]; and (6) develop a PowerPoint slide presentation of project highlights and post it on Discussion Board for all other students to read and comment. [...] students received credit for completion of each component” [link: [Department Assessment](#)]. In another example, the Educational Counseling program assessed their students’ capacity to use technology in counseling. The faculty administered to students, halfway through their program, a Technical Competencies Electronic Portfolio developed by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision in 2016. All students, 100%, scored within the target or acceptable range [link: [Department Assessment](#)].

The fourth broadly defined ULO for all graduate programs, conducting applied research, is typified by the History department’s program-specific goal of having their students present research at professional conferences. Assessment results in 2016 indicated that 21 History graduate students had presented at professional conferences during the previous six years. This outcome exceeded program expectations, which motivated faculty to have more students present a project requiring application of advanced knowledge in an out-of-class setting [link: [Department Assessment](#)]. Similarly, biology graduate students are expected to demonstrate, “advanced ability to develop an original and independent research idea and design in the form of a written proposal.” Assessing this goal in 2015-16, the department found that all graduate students could write and present scientific proposals with a mean score exceeding 90%. Buoyed by these results, the faculty noted: “As part of this activity, we developed a program-approved instruction document on proposal writing. We are going to continue to use this document to assist students in developing scientifically themed proposals” [link: [Department Assessment](#)]. As a final example of conducting applied research, social work graduate students are assessed on their ability to advance human rights and social and economic justice as well engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. The program used 35 advanced-practice behaviors to evaluate students’ performance in the field. Their assessment

results indicated that slightly more than 85% of all students demonstrated competency in this area [link: [Department Assessment](#)].

The preceding section describes how CSU Bakersfield graduate programs have established standards of performance that are more sophisticated and challenging than those at undergraduate levels. Each program establishes its own set of learning outcomes that align with University-wide learning outcomes for all graduate students, which are to promote specialized and integrative learning; provide opportunities for practicing intellectual skills; and conduct applied learning. Graduate programs use ongoing assessment to ascertain that student learning is meeting expectations, and to improve student learning, where necessary.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSIONS**

This essay describes how CSU Bakersfield documents students' development and evaluates their attainment of knowledge and skills, consistent with the goals of the degree programs. At the undergraduate and graduate levels, data shows that the vast majority of academic programs consistently achieve faculty-set learning outcomes. Equally, data shows that CSU Bakersfield recognizes key areas in which to improve student learning. Importantly, the University harnesses the WSCUC Core Competencies to build effective learning experiences. CSU Bakersfield's University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) are built around all five of the WSCUC Core Competencies: oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy, and the new GE Program Learning Outcomes (GE PLOs) prominently feature the WSCUC Core Competencies. Finally, this essay explains how the Degree Qualifications Profile infuses integrative knowledge throughout the graduate learning experience. It also demonstrates how the Degree Qualifications Profile was used to develop University Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs (ULOGP). In Essay 5, the relation between these measures of performance and student success will be shown in detail.

## **ESSAY 5 - STUDENT SUCCESS: STUDENT LEARNING, RETENTION, AND GRADUATION (CFRS 1.2, 2.7, 2.13)**

CSU Bakersfield is committed to offering excellent undergraduate and graduate programs that advance the intellectual and personal development of its students in an underserved region of California. Among the 23 campuses comprising the CSU, CSU Bakersfield has some of the lowest retention and graduation rates, largely due to the poor academic preparation and low-income status of many of our students. At the same time, as mentioned above, CSU Bakersfield ranks number three in the nation for improving the socioeconomic status of its graduates [link: [CSU Bakersfield Among Top Universities for Social Mobility of Students](#)]. This essay describes patterns of student success at CSU Bakersfield, and details activities underway to improve it.

### **5.1 DEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS (CFRs 1.2 and 2.10)**

Student success is the primary goal of CSU Bakersfield. In 2016, the CSU launched Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) [link: [CSU GI 2025 website](#)] to graduate an additional 500,000 students by 2025, to meet its share of California's projected future workforce needs. GI 2025 is a helpful framework for CSU Bakersfield to organize and focus efforts to improve several specific areas of student success, particularly retention and graduation rates. The following data compares CSU Bakersfield's current graduation rates (2016/2017) to the goals for the entire CSU system:

1. Raise the 6-year graduation rate from 40% for first-time freshmen to 56%
2. Raise the 4-year graduation rate for first-time freshmen from 16% to 30%
3. Raise the 4-year graduation rate for transfer students from 69% to 74%
4. Raise the 2-year graduation rate for transfer students from 40% to 48%
5. Eliminate all demographic achievement gaps

To meet or exceed the targets, the provost formed a Graduation Initiative Task Force (GITF) in October 2016 [link: [CSU Bakersfield GITF website](#)], with faculty, staff and administrators from across the university. The GITF meets bi-weekly to examine and design strategies to clarify degree requirements, promote early intervention programs, reduce barriers to student progress, and help students successfully navigate the curriculum [link: [CSUB GITF Meeting Minutes](#)].

The GITF focuses on action programs to drive retention and graduation rates. Based on a review of data, existing policies, and feedback from all constituents, the GITF emphasizes programs designed to make comprehensive and holistic changes to broaden student access, impact student retention, and expedite student success. The GITF also developed a tactical flowchart of incoming freshman and transfer cohorts, with intervention programs at crucial points in students' progress toward the bachelor's degree [[GITF Tactical Flowchart doc. 1.2:03](#)]. Each intervention program, developed and vetted by the GITF, has an assigned project owner, priority ranking, and timeline. These interventions are measurable, with direct impact on graduation.

Importantly, the GITF does not simply focus on empirical targets as measures of student success. It also concentrates on qualitative enhancements that support students to achieve their goals. For example, a new interactive *Map to Your Future* website has been developed [link:

[Map to your Future](#)]. In a user-friendly format, this site displays a year-by-year path of the courses and milestones required to complete each undergraduate degree in four years.

One touchstone for promoting student success is the new student success website [link: [CSU Bakersfield Student Success Website](#)]. The site is designed for multiple stakeholders, including students, administrators, and local community colleges. It provides a single location for all the data dashboards relevant to student success and contains additional information related to the campus' Graduation Initiative Task Force (GITF).

## **5.2 PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING STUDENT SUCCESS (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 2.13 and 2.14)**

CSU Bakersfield's coordinated plans for student success are activated before students set foot on campus, through partnerships with local high schools and community colleges that facilitate smooth transitions to CSU Bakersfield for first-time freshmen and transfer students. As admitted students consider CSU Bakersfield, the message of student success is widely broadcast. The High School University Promise (HSUP) [[doc. 2.10:11](#)] is our first step toward promoting student success. It provides students entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade within the Kern High School District (KHSD, the largest independent high school district in California) with a certificate from CSU Bakersfield guaranteeing admission to the University as long as they meet the admission requirements and are college-ready. The certificate is designed to raise college awareness and students' educational aspirations, and foster a college-going culture in the region.

CSU Bakersfield's strong partnerships within the KHSD is evidenced by the participation of 75% of KHSD students in the Early Assessment Program (EAP) and related activities. Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) sections are increasing in all local high schools. As a result, the overall percentage of first year students needing developmental coursework has been declining steadily over the past ten years, from 80% in 2007 to 54% in 2016. During this period, the percentage needing developmental coursework in English has also declined, from 18% in 2007 to 7% in 2016. However, the percentage needing developmental work in math has increased from 8% in to almost 23%. In addition, fewer students now need the lowest of the levels of remedial math and English, a promising and positive change (from 54% in 2007 to 23% in 2016), which may result in part from changes in admissions standards as well as system-wide efforts in the CSU to influence college preparatory instruction in the high schools. Importantly, these early interventions improve incoming students' chance of success.

Educational Opportunity Students (EOP) take courses in our Early Start and Summer Bridge programs over the summer to better transition to college. The Early Start program [[doc. 2.10:09](#)] prepares incoming freshmen for college-level math and English through simultaneous summer courses appropriate for different skill levels. In 2016, 41% of the students who participated in Early Start completed at least one level of remediation for English and 71% completed at least one level for math. Within one year, the total number of students needing remediation decreased, which impacted the number of Early Start participants and success rate in Summer 2017. In 2017, 42% of the students who participated in Early Start completed at least one level of remediation for English, and 56% completed at least one level for math [[doc. 2.10:09](#)]. Summer Bridge, a two-week long residential program, is designed to transition incoming EOP

students from high school to college [[doc. 2.10:10](#)]. Not only does it help them place into more advanced developmental math and English, Summer Bridge increases student knowledge of University expectations for student success; familiarizes them with campus policies, procedures, and offices; and creates a staff-supported social network to increase student confidence, team-building skills, and a sense of purpose.

Before their first academic term, students attend orientation to explore campus and meet an academic advisor for assistance in class registration. All incoming students and their families are invited to the New Student Convocation and Pinning Ceremony, a formal welcome with recited pledges of commitment to academic success by faculty, staff, students, and families.

Student Housing and Residence Life support student success by providing convenience, affordability, and structure to support learning for residents. Opportunities for personal and professional development include workshops on topics such as: Passport Challenge; How to Be an Ally; Student Staff Diversity Training; Student Staff Current Trends in Drugs and Higher Education; Blood, Sweat and Tears: Welcome to Nursing School; Weekly Yoga Hour; Yes, No, Maybe So – Sexual Consent; Financial Literacy; and Resume and Cover Letter Writing.

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships supports student success by targeting on-time, high-need students in the award packaging process for limited, gift aid. Recently the packaging process was updated to strategically award students who are matriculated or have accepted their admission. This effective philosophy of administering limited funds supports the neediest, committed students at a crucial stage and helps them persist towards graduation. Financial literacy can also help students make the most of their financial aid opportunities, develop strong personal finance habits and persist to graduation. CSU Bakersfield participates in Financial Literacy Awareness Month, hosting numerous FAFSA and scholarship workshops on campus during the priority FAFSA application period. The University partners with *iGrad*, an online financial literacy resource, available to every student, and financial aid staff visit the Antelope Valley campus at new student orientations and on a monthly basis for one-on-one meetings with students. Students not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) may petition for academic probation status, a program that helps hundreds of students each year progress toward graduation. If approved, students must meet with an academic advisor to create an Academic Plan, which outlines the necessary steps to re-attain SAP status, including Unit Pace and GPA, while still receiving financial aid. At least 55% of students meet their plan each term, and 10% of graduates per term were on academic probation at one time. A Student Support Grant is in development to assist students in their last term, who have exhausted financial aid resources and applied to graduate.

To further strengthen support for students, the Academic Senate resolved to implement a midterm assessment program for all students on the semester calendar. The Academic Advising and Resource Center (AARC) conducted a successful pilot program with four faculty in fall 2016 and implemented the program campus-wide in spring 2017. The program gives students targeted feedback from advisors on their progress in courses while connecting them to appropriate campus resources. In fall 2017, the response rate from professors reached 37%,

with over 2,000 students receiving intervention, while the spring 2018 response rate was 25%, with 1,389 students receiving intervention [Midterm Assessment Evaluation doc. 1.2:11].

CSU Bakersfield has expanded outreach to enroll veterans and provides dedicated staff to ensure that veterans receive the academic support needed to succeed academically, from recruitment to degree completion. The Veterans Resource Center provides camaraderie, networking, and support to student veterans, with workshops on applying to the university; accessing military benefits; finding housing; academic advising; financial aid; career advising; referral to campus counseling and psychological services; referral to disability services; etc.

Recruitment of international students, and encouraging domestic students to study abroad, supports students' professional and personal development for a global job market. The International Students and Programs (ISP) office offers many services to prospective international students, such as assistance with admission requirements and preparation for their consular interview. ISP facilitates and hosts a comprehensive international orientation for new students and helps them maintain legal status and obtain services while enrolled, through the University's strong relationships with partners such as Homeland Security, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Social Security. Assistance with course selection, transfer course reviews, and scholarship applications is offered, as well as workshops for practical training to educate students on options for working in the U.S. after graduation. The International Club and International Education Week offer additional activities for international students. Study abroad for domestic CSU Bakersfield students is encouraged by ISP staff and global ambassadors, who conduct classroom presentations, workshops, tabling, and pre-departure orientations. The University now offers single semester study abroad programs through the Center for Global Outreach. From 2013-14 through 2017-18, from five to sixteen have studied abroad during the academic year, in nine countries. In summer 2018, 34 students studied abroad.

### **5.3. RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES (CFRS 1.2, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14)**

Graduating more students within the four- and six-year timeframe is a major goal for the University. The Graduation Initiative Taskforce is examining and designing strategies to clarify degree requirements, reduce barriers to student progression, and help students successfully navigate their curriculum [Graduation Rate Detail doc. 1.2:13].

CSU Bakersfield's four-year graduation rate has been gradually and steadily improving over the past five years, reaching a high of 18.5% in 2016 (Fall 2012 cohort). However, last year it dropped to 16.3% (Fall 2013 cohort). The first-year retention rates, an early indicator of eventual graduation rates, have also been steadily improving. The first-year retention rate for the Fall 2016 cohort is 76.4% [doc. CSU Bakersfield Factbook p. 11. 1.2:14].

First-year retention rates at the University tend to be similar across Underrepresented minority (URM) and non-URM students. Differences between the student groups emerge in the four-year graduation rates and diminish in six-year graduation rates. CSU Bakersfield is one of the few CSUs to have closed the achievement gap between URM and non-URM students. The four- and six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshman seeking a bachelor's degree fluctuate slightly from year to year. The four-year graduation rate ranged from 12.9% to 18.5%

in the last five years; in four of the last five years, the four-year graduation rate increased, while the six-year graduation rate ranged from 38.4% to 42.7%.

Similarly, the one-year retention rate for transfers has been increasing since fall 2010. In fall 2016, the one-year retention rate for transfers was 83.0% [[CSU Bakersfield Retention Rate Detail doc. 1.2:13](#)]. The two- and four-year graduation rate for transfers have been increasing for the last five years; the two-year rate is now in the lower to mid-40s, the six-year rate in the upper 60s [[Graduation Rate Detail: Transfers doc. 1.2:16](#)]. The two and three-year graduation rates for graduate student cohorts have shown steady progress. The two-year graduation rate for the Fall 2014 cohort exceeded 55%. The three-year rates have been roughly 70% [[Grad Student Graduation Rate Detail 1.2:17](#)].

The Graduation Rate Dashboard (GRD), which accounts for all students who earn an undergraduate degree from the University without regard to their matriculation status (i.e. first time, transfer, full time or part time), is a useful tool to estimate student success, especially given the student population. The data enables institutions to identify enrollment, retention, and graduation patterns and problems across all undergraduate student categories. The two most significant GRD measures are the Unit Redemption Rate (URR) and the Absolute Graduation Rate (AGR). The URR is the proportion of units offered by an institution that are eventually 'redeemed' for a degree. The AGR is the proportion of students entering an institution who eventually graduate from that institution. Unlike the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which only tracks cohort-based, first-time, full-time students, the Absolute Graduation Rate includes all students at the institution. The primary observations related to CSU Bakersfield GRD data [[CSU Bakersfield GRD Data xls. 1.2:15](#)] are the following: 1) CSU Bakersfield's unduplicated headcount has grown steadily from 7,852 in 2009-10 to 11,418 in 2016-17. A sizable portion of that growth occurred in the last three years (through 2016-17), when the unduplicated headcount rose roughly 25%. 2) Over the same three-year period, the URR has also grown from 76% to 82%, and 3) the AGR has grown from 51% to 58%, significantly above the IPEDS cohort-based graduation rate.

### **5.3.1 FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE (CFR 1.2 and 2.13)**

As detailed in section 5.2, CSU Bakersfield's commitment to student success begins before students set foot on campus, to assist them in transitioning from high school or community college to the University. Once students are admitted, one of the best means of informing them about academic and campus life is the New Student Orientation [[link: CSU Bakersfield Orientation website](#)]. These orientations have changed dramatically in the last three years, with Student Affairs staff, Athletics representatives, the campus pep band, and interactive games as integral components of the energized sessions. Comprehensive workshops, required for all new undergraduates, help them transition both academically and socially to CSU Bakersfield. The workshops introduce the services, activities, and programs provided by the University to support their education, along with academic programs, planning, policies, and course selection.

As students begin their studies at CSU Bakersfield, a touchstone is the two-unit, year-long First-Year Seminar course. It provides students with an engaged, supportive environment where they can make vital connections with a cohort of peers, their instructor, and key members of the

campus community who can help ensure their success [link: [CSU Bakersfield FYS website](#)]. In the course, students are introduced to the themes and skills necessary for academic success, including key study skills, and planning for the future.

### **5.3.2 TRANSFER STUDENT EXPERIENCE (CFR 2.13 and 2.14)**

CSU Bakersfield's recent enrollment growth includes an increase in transfer students, primarily from our five feeder community colleges in Bakersfield, Taft, Cerro Coso, Porterville, and Antelope Valley. Sharing responsibility for the transfer student success, these partner campuses provide dedicated transfer student advising centers where CSU Bakersfield Transfer Specialists provide onsite advising services. University staff also provide additional support in the admission application process, hosting financial aid workshops. One significant outcome of these partnerships is increasing interest among transfer students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields and better prepared STEM majors. Staff provide prospective and current STEM majors with personalized admission information, academic counseling in General Education, and STEM major degree requirements.

To integrate transfer students and native students into one group, CSU Bakersfield's new AIMS GE program includes a Junior Year Diversity and Reflection course. This three-unit course includes an assignment for students to reflect on their lower-division GE experience, whether completed at CSU Bakersfield or another institution, and consider how those basic skills and ways of knowing form the basis for their major coursework [link: [CSU Bakersfield JYDR website](#)].

A set of programs to further assist transfer students is in development. One example is the Community College Kern Promise [link: [Kern Promise website](#)], which signals CSU Bakersfield's strong partnership with Bakersfield College (BC) to collaboratively ensure a smooth transition for transfer students, student success, and timely graduation. Twice a semester, CSU Bakersfield and BC staff collaborate in providing CSU Bakersfield Onsite Admission Days. BC and CSU Bakersfield have also worked closely with the Kern High School District to align the transition from high school to college in math and English. Similarly, at the Antelope Valley campus, staff collaborate with Antelope Valley College (AVC) to support transfer student transition. CSU Bakersfield Antelope Valley staff visit AVC multiple times each month to provide one-on-one advising, information sessions, and workshops for prospective students.

Enrollment growth continues to be impacted by the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) [link: [Associate Degree for Transfer website](#)]. A California Community College student who earns the Associate in Arts degree for Transfer (AA-T) or the Associate in Science degree for Transfer (AS-T) is granted priority admission to the CSU into a similar baccalaureate degree program with guaranteed junior standing, as long as the student meets all prescribed admission requirements. Once admitted, the student must complete only 60 additional prescribed units to earn the degree. Because CSU Bakersfield is one of only four non-impacted CSU campuses, many qualified students are directed to our campus. CSU Bakersfield—one of four CSU and nine California Community Colleges campuses to receive the honor—was recognized by The Campaign for College Opportunity as a “2017 Champion for Higher Education” for excelling at enrolling and graduating Associate Degree for Transfer earners. In 2016-17, CSU Bakersfield

enrolled 236 Associate Degrees for Transfer, an increase of 808% (210 additional ADT earners) from the previous year. In fall 2016, 1,014 transfer students enrolled.

To facilitate the transfer of community college students, CSU Bakersfield has also worked with BC in developing a new Kern Promise FINISH IN 4 transfer initiative, inaugurated on May 8, 2018, to provide clear and direct baccalaureate completion transfer pathways for students from BC who want to graduate from CSU Bakersfield. The Finish in 4 program guarantees students will complete their transfer degree in the first two years at Bakersfield College and their baccalaureate degree in the following two years at CSU Bakersfield, with priority registration and tracking to monitor their success. An unprecedented partnership between higher education institutions, the program benefits students and ultimately the community by boosting college transfers and increasing four-year college completion. With just 22% of Kern County residents 25 years of age and older holding an Associate's Degree or higher, compared with California's average of 39%, this initiative is an excellent way to decrease time to graduation, close attainment gaps, increase college graduation rates in Kern County, and aid in student success. Transfer Specialists have been hired to advise students who wish to complete the program.

### **5.3.3 GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE (CFR 2.13)**

Post-baccalaureate education is both central and crucial to CSU Bakersfield's mission. Located in one of the most economically depressed parts of California, the University provides graduate programs that are critical to the economy of Kern County. The low level of education attainment in the region is a factor in growing graduate programs and increasing enrollment, but the University is committed to increasing participation in graduation education. In fact, CSU Bakersfield is nationally recognized as a top provider of Master's degrees for Hispanics [link: [CSU Bakersfield Hispanic Outlook article](#)] and is ranked by *The Washington Monthly* in the top 10 for Master's degree programs because of its "contribution to the public good in three broad categories: social mobility (recruiting and graduating low-income students), research, and service" [link: [CSUB Moves Into Top 10...](#)]. CSU Bakersfield currently offers 15 master's programs and one doctoral degree in education. Overall, the graduation rate of master's students is very high, although few students graduate within two years, and fewer than half graduate within three years.

CSU Bakersfield's Graduate Student Center offers new student orientations at the start of each term, including a campus tour as well as break-out sessions with Graduate Program Directors. This event is attended by approximately 100 new graduate students, plus dozens of administrators, faculty, and staff, and is live-streamed for those who cannot attend.

In hundreds of academic fields, degrees and post-baccalaureate coursework enable students to progress further in fields of interest and employment, and to become licensed or qualified in a variety of applied areas. These programs enable students to advance, to gain higher salaries, and have a stronger impact on all sectors of society. Graduate students in the sciences, engineering, technology, and agriculture have formed the critical and important technological leadership and mid-level technological workforce in the region.

### **5.3.4 UNDERGRADUATE RETENTION AND COMPLETION INITIATIVES (CFR 1.2 and 2.13)**

In response to the recent statewide focus on graduation rates in the CSU and UC, and specifically the Chancellor's Office Graduation 2025 Initiative, CSU Bakersfield has launched a 15 to Finish campaign [[Graduation Initiative 2025 doc. 1.2:04](#)]. The campaign proactively promotes on-time graduation for all incoming students through guided pathways, academic roadmaps/plans, and intrusive advising. The intensive marketing campaign includes brochures explaining the benefits of taking 15 units per term, or 30 per year, in order to graduate on time; 15 to Finish t-shirts for all students who participate; promotional items in weekly giveaways and drawings once students sign their Commitment to Complete; and a public proclamation of their intent to complete their degree in four years [[15 to Finish Materials doc. 2.10:12](#)].

One of the largest, most comprehensive initiatives of the GTF has been the Block Scheduling pilot [[link: Block Scheduling website](#)]. Block Scheduling is the formal assignment of an incoming student's first-year schedule, rather than the student selecting their courses and times. Prior retention and graduation data indicated that incoming students do not enroll in enough units to graduate in 4 years. "The data indicate that first-time students who self-register will consistently under-enroll units in their first term schedules. By under-loading, students unknowingly increase their time-to-degree and increase the likelihood that they will not graduate (see sidebar). For the upcoming Fall semester 52% (n=721) will likely begin their careers behind schedule by enrolling in fewer than 15 units" [[Block Scheduling Success Summary doc. 1.2:06](#)].

The first year of the Block Scheduling pilot targeted students who were undeclared, students enrolled in a major from the School of Arts & Humanities, and students enrolled in the BS in Business Administration program. Approximately 450 students were provided with a schedule with courses planned out for a year based on the respective major roadmaps. The Block Scheduling pilot is in its second year with nearly 60% of incoming students participating. The results thus far have been promising. During 2017-18, an evaluation of the pilot found that "Block scheduling is correlated with both taking more units and passing more units. The increase in mean units for both of these factors is found to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. BS students enrolled in (Units Taken) .655 more units than students outside of the block schedule. Though block scheduled students enrolled in more units, students in the block schedule passed 1.26 more units than students outside of the block schedule" [[Block Schedule Pilot Evaluation doc. 1.2:10](#)]. If the pilot is approved for full implementation, the campus will likely see dramatic increases in retention and graduation.

Another element in CSU Bakersfield's efforts to support student success is the California Promise Program [[link: California Promise website](#)], a graduation initiative available to both first-year students and transfer students who have completed an Associate Degree for Transfer from any California Community College. The California Promise Program, part of a system-wide effort in the CSU to increase graduation rates while eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps, supports students who make either the four-year or two-year pledge. They are given priority registration and a dedicated pledge advisor to support on-time degree completion, with whom they must meet to develop a degree completion plan. They must maintain good academic standing each semester, completing 30 semester units each academic year, including summer and winter sessions. In Fall 2016 semester, 36 CSU Bakersfield students signed the pledge. Of

those participating in the 2-year pledge, 95% (n=21) graduated within two years. In 2017-18, 83 additional students joined the program.

A number of programs at CSU Bakersfield support the success of disadvantaged students. First established by the California legislature in 1969, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at CSU Bakersfield ensures educational equity by admitting regular and special students who come from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. EOP Admissions maintain the expanding EOP application pool, admitting first-time freshmen and transfer students who meet statewide criteria [[link: CSU Bakersfield EOP Program page](#)]. EOP processed a record number of online and paper applications in 2017. In all, 2,682 unduplicated applications were submitted and processed. For fall 2018, EOP had already processed applications for 7,400 students in the first months of 2018. EOP's Guardian Scholars Program focuses on those students who come to CSU Bakersfield from foster youth out-of-home placement, guardianship, and group homes, to ensure their success by providing access to safe and stable housing, independent living workshops, and educational counseling. In 2015-16, 31 Guardian Scholars Students enrolled and in 2016-17, 36 enrolled, with 23 returning and 13 new students. In 2015-16, 4 of 8 non-returning Guardian Scholars graduated.

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at CSU Bakersfield is a federally funded program designed to help students with migrant or seasonal farm working backgrounds [[link: CSU Bakersfield CAMP program](#)]. CAMP offers eligible students pre-college transition and first-year support services to help develop skills necessary to succeed in college. In 2017, all 75 CAMP students attended a 2-week summer course with supplemental instruction during Early Start. Throughout the academic year, students receive personal, academic, and career counseling, and meet with the CAMP Academic Advisor at least four times per term. Students enroll in the fall course GST 1210 Career Development, and are referred to tutoring in math, English and other subjects as needed, after review of their academic progress reports. In 2016, over 85% of students continued to their next year, higher than the overall CSU Bakersfield one-year retention rate of roughly 75%. In 2010-11, CSU Bakersfield' CAMP program was nationally ranked in the top 10. [[link: CSUB's CAMP Ranks Among Top 10](#)]

Academic advising is a critical, contributing factor in student retention, progress toward degree, and degree completion. Working with the academic advisors and associate deans, the mandatory advising process was modified in fall 2017 to require students to meet with an academic advisor (faculty and/or staff) at key milestones, for example, upon completing a set number of units to ensure they are on track to graduate in a timely manner. A registration hold is also placed on students who earn 120+ units, to reduce the number of super seniors. Students who complete 90 units are required to develop a graduation plan with their academic advisor. The provost's Campus Conversation on Advising began during the Spring 2018 semester [[link: Campus Advising Conversation site](#)]. Three questionnaires were distributed to students, faculty and advisors. The university also engaged Education Advisory Board Consulting Services to assess the advising structure at the university, and a taskforce has been established to develop an Advising and Faculty Mentoring Model. This new model should establish a more consistent operating protocol for academic advising and define clear roles and responsibilities for advising staff and faculty mentors across the four academic schools.

#### **5.4. LEARNING AND PERSONAL GROWTH OF STUDENT-ATHLETES (CFR. 2.13)**

To support the academic success of student-athletes, CSU Bakersfield provides services tailored to them in the Kegley Center for Student Success [link: [Kegley Center website](#)]. Academic advisors are assigned to specific teams to guide them through graduation, and athletics advisors work with campus and faculty advisors to provide students with a four-year graduation plan. Student-athletes also receive tutoring and mentorship throughout each term, with academic workshops on issues such as time management and test-taking and writing skills. All workshops are also offered to non-athlete students.

In the 2016-17 academic year, CSU Bakersfield achieved its highest Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of 75% for student-athletes, an increase from 60% in 2013. As a result of grant-supported programs, student-athletes earned a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) for the sixth consecutive academic term. Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores also have increased, with volleyball and sand volleyball receiving public recognition by the NCAA. Seven teams achieved a 1000 Single-Year APR and thirteen teams earned a 950 or higher Multi-Year APR. This represents a departmental APR score increase from 939 to 972 in four years.

##### **5.4.1 INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING (CFR 2.13)**

In 2016-17, approximately 40% of CSU Bakersfield (3710 students) visited a tutoring center at least once, and subject-area centers on campus (social science, arts & humanities, math, science, computer science & engineering, business, developmental math) saw a 29.4% increase in visits from 2015-16. In 2016-17, visits (including all centers and study hall) increased nearly 33%, from 34,422 to 45,750 [link: [CSU Bakersfield Tutoring Center website](#)].

One of the most popular tutoring centers is the Writing Resource Center (WRC), whose goal is to help students become better writers by asking questions and engaging students in conversation to help them reflect on how to improve their own work. The WRC assists students with any writing assignment at any stage of the writing process for any discipline, as well as resumes, cover letters, and other technical writing, and provides a place for students to study [link: [CSU Bakersfield Writing Resource Center website](#)]. With outreach, the WRC has become a multi-disciplinary nexus for writing across disciplines. In 2016-17, visits from non-English courses comprised nearly 70%, and about 22% of the student population visited the WRC.

Another form of support for student learning is Supplemental Instruction (SI), an academic support program that targets traditionally difficult, gateway, and bottleneck courses, in which a many students receive a grade of D, F, or W. SI focuses on student retention and facilitating learning, through the identification of the difficult course, placement of an SI Leader, and regularly scheduled peer-facilitated SI study group sessions. The goal of SI is to create independent learners, and the SI leader links the actual class and SI session, where course readings, content, and material are brought together with effective learning strategies in a collaborative learning environment [link: [CSU Bakersfield Supplemental Instruction website](#)].

The Student Success Counselor (SCC) provides individual and group counseling and emotional support and skill development to students on academic probation and in academic jeopardy, in

coordination with the School Professional Academic advisors and Faculty Academic Advisors. The SCC reaches out to students directly to introduce them to the Counseling Center and other necessary services, including outreach to underrepresented students/minorities, particularly but not limited to African American students and other students of color, to close the achievement gap and reduce academic barriers. The SSC also assists at-risk students with developing academic and emotional coping strategies, navigating important and complex university systems, interacting with faculty, and utilizing support services. Hired in fall 2017, the SCC has met one-on-one with nearly 100 students for mental health symptoms and/or academic issues.

CSU Bakersfield has also implemented Smart Planner, a PeopleSoft Academic Advising tool widely adapted by students, advisors, and university administrators to develop students' academic plans. Smart Planner automatically generates a personalized, multi-semester course sequence, based on each student's major and progress; provides a user-friendly interface for students and advisors, including drag-and-drop schedule adjustments; summarizes student progress in one or two, easy-to-understand pages; shows students the impact of their decisions, such as deferring math, taking summer classes, or changing majors; handles full-time, part-time, and transfer students equally well; tracks checkpoint courses that can help predict a student's success in a major; and helps predict seat capacity based on actual future demand.

#### **5.4.2 UNDERGRADUATE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH (CFR 2.13)**

At CSU Bakersfield, the Student Union and Organizational Governance supports the growth and development of recognized student organizations in 15 different categories, including academic, social, multicultural, religious, and political clubs, as discussed in Essay 3.2.1 above. To advance and celebrate leadership skill development at CSU Bakersfield, Student Union & Organizational Governance has developed the LEADER Program and the Student Leader Hall of Fame. The LEADER Program is a series of leadership skill development workshops that culminates in participants receiving leadership certification, which appears on a co-curricular transcript [link: [CSU Bakersfield LEADER program website](#)]. The Student Leader Hall of Fame celebrates the top student leadership talent among student organizations, athletics, each of CSU Bakersfield's four schools, and the student government, Associated Students, Inc., with the names and photographs of inductees on a plaque in the main hallway of the Student Union.

One of CSU Bakersfield's newly established signature programs is called Sensational Sophomores. At the end of the freshman year, students who have earned a 3.0 GPA or above and 30 credits or more receive an invitation from the Vice President for Student Affairs to join this exclusive honorary group. Sensational Sophomores form a tight-knit community, participating in regularly scheduled leadership training along with community service activities, including building homes for Habitat for Humanity. A number of the Sensational Sophomores advance to the Junior Year Experience, and through close work with the CSU Bakersfield Division of University Advancement, learn about organizing special events, engaging with the media through arranging campus interviews and writing press releases, and developing a senior class project/gift.

The Center for Career Education and Community Engagement (CECE) plays an important role in the personal and professional growth of undergraduate students in many ways, including the

successful inclusion of service learning in the curriculum of nearly 75 CSU Bakersfield courses each semester (159 courses in 2017-2018), positively affecting community partners with 23,682 hours of service [[link: Center for Career Education website](#)]. In addition to service learning, CECE helps students secure internships and jobs at both the Bakersfield and Antelope Valley campuses. A service learning faculty coordinator position was established in 2017 [[Service Learning Coord. Description doc. 2.5:04 and 2.3:06](#)] to cultivate and support faculty interests and efforts in developing service learning opportunities. In addition to service learning, CECE actively facilitates internships in the Bakersfield and Antelope Valley communities for students. The success and effectiveness of these CECE initiatives have been supported by the CSU Chancellor's Call to Service Grant Program. Funding provided each year by the CSU Chancellor has helped CECE maintain a high level of support to CSU Bakersfield students.

#### **5.4.3 INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT GRADUATE LEARNING AND PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH (CFR 2.13)**

The Graduate Student Center (GSC) supports graduate learning and personal and professional through advising and outreach, a new graduate student orientation and professional development workshops, a technology lab and student lounge, and scholarship and award opportunities. Professional development workshops cover such topics as Financial Aid for Graduate Education, Literature Review Writing, Presentation and Interview Skills and Stress Management. The GSC technology lab and student lounge provides access for CSU Bakersfield graduate students needing a computer, printer, scanner, and/or space for group meetings and study sessions. The GSC also offers laptops, iPads, and MacBooks for checkout during the academic year. Each year, the GSC technology lab and student lounge is visited over 3,400 times and over 50 students take advantage of the GSC laptop/iPad check out program.

Graduate scholarship and award opportunities include competitive awards such as the student-faculty collaborative initiatives (SFCI) for research/scholarship, community engagement, and teaching/pedagogy, the California Pre-Doctoral Program, and the California Doctoral Incentive Program [[link: GSC Website](#)]. Need-based awards include Graduate Equity Fellowships and non-resident fee waivers. One recently funded SFCI project focused on community gardens. With the help of a faculty mentor, the graduate student developed a needs assessment project, ultimately sharing the information “with all collaborating agencies: City of Bakersfield Solid Waste Division, Keep Bakersfield Beautiful, Bakersfield Police Department Neighborhood Watch, The Giving Tree Project Benefit Corporation, The Center On Race, Poverty and the Environment, the Greenfield Family Resource Center, and the Greenfield Walking Group” [[link: SFCI example](#)]. Since 2013, forty-seven SFCI awards have been granted [[link: Collaborative Initiative Past Awards](#)].

#### **5.5 STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (CFR 2.13)**

The Student Health Service (SHS) and the CSU Bakersfield Counseling Center (CC) focus on the physical and mental health and well-being of students. The SHS is accredited every two years by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare. The Counseling Center is accredited by an independent mental health professional, under strict guidelines provided by the CSU Chancellor's office. In 2016-17 the SHS had a total of 10,341 patient visits; 6,056 involved

primary care, 749 were for check-ups and physical exams, 1,104 for reproductive health care, 1,382 for immunizations, 5,945 for treatments by a nurse, and 3,546 for lab tests. In all, 1,797 prescriptions were filled, and 2,961 athletic training sessions occurred. The SHS engages in significant outreach to CSU Bakersfield students, including a Welcome Back to Campus, Breast Cancer Awareness, Great American Smoke Out, World AIDS day, Sexual Responsibility week, Safe Spring Break, and other tabling events. The SHS partners with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to recruit, train, and engage students in peer health educator training on various health topics relevant to college students. These peer educators provide workshops and consultations with other students on campus under the supervision of the SHS.

CSU Bakersfield athletics is dedicated to providing student-athletes with the highest quality of healthcare to enhance their athletic performance and overall well-being. The sport environment promotes mental health, destigmatizes mental health challenges, and normalizing care and identification of mental health disorders. CSU Bakersfield athletics has implemented a mental health program to educate coaches, staff, and student-athletes about mental health while connecting the athletics department to other departments and organizations.

Food insecurity has been linked with higher risk for adverse effects across multiple life domains, including lower academic performance and negative health outcomes. Each day, 25% of all CSU Bakersfield students miss a meal because they do not have sufficient resources to obtain food. In 2013, results from a campus food insecurity survey conducted by Dr. Aaron Hegde, Associate Professor of Economics and Director of the Environmental Resource Program, and graduate student, Eva Belen Ventura, prompted efforts to establish a campus food pantry and to offer food distribution on campus in partnership with the USDA and Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAP-K). In 2015, CSU Chancellor Timothy White commissioned a system-wide study on the issue of homelessness and food insecurity among students on all 23 campuses. In November 2016, following a systemwide CSU Basic Needs Conference, CSU Bakersfield formed a cross-divisional Housing and Food Security Committee and registered as a USDA commodities food distribution site with CAP-K and began food distribution [link: [CSU Bakersfield Food Pantry](#)], in collaboration with the Food Pantry of Kern County. To date a total of 1,395 individuals and their families have benefited from the program. The food security needs of Antelope Valley students addressed through partnership between CSU Bakersfield and Antelope Valley College. The overwhelming success of the monthly distribution implied a need for more support, so the committee established the CSU Bakersfield Food Pantry, which is open daily Monday through Friday, with additional hours on some evenings. The committee initially anticipated that approximately 200 students would use the Food Pantry each month in Antelope Valley; in fact, 200 students obtained food from the pantry each week. Persistent challenges the committee is addressing include housing insecurity.

The CSU Bakersfield Edible Garden is currently underway and will create experiential STEM learning opportunities for students and faculty. With the motto, "Growing Student Success," the 1.75 acre garden will help promote healthy food access and supplement STEM education in Bakersfield and the region by connecting CSU Bakersfield, K-14 students, and community members with super-local, healthy, fresh produce they can grow, research, harvest, cook, and

eat in the garden. Internship opportunities will be available to students interested in pursuing a career in biology, agriculture, business, or related fields [link: [CSU Bakersfield Edible Garden](#)].

### **5.6 TRACKING POST-GRADUATION SUCCESS (CFR 1.2 and 2.13)**

Tracking alumni outcomes is an important part of determining student success and the return on education investment and career preparation provided by CSU Bakersfield. Knowing where and how CSU Bakersfield graduates are employed can also assist in building career-mentoring relationships and post-graduation opportunities with current students [link: [Alumni Survey Results](#)]. The overwhelming majority of CSU Bakersfield graduates stay in California, most of them in Kern County and Bakersfield. The Alumni Relations database shows local institutions such as State Farm Insurance, The Wonderful Company, Aera Energy, Dignity Health, Kern County city governments, the Kern Superintendent of Schools (KSOS), the Kern High School District (KHSD), and CSU Bakersfield employ the highest number of graduates. Kern County's economy benefits greatly from the economic success of CSU Bakersfield alumni.

### **5.7 CONCLUSIONS**

In sum, CSU Bakersfield is committed to offering outstanding undergraduate and graduate programs that advance the intellectual and personal development of its students. As shown above, the campus has developed organizational structures to harness data to improve its retention and graduation rates. These structures include academic and support communities that expand the intellectual and professional opportunities for students.

## **ESSAY 6 - QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT, PROGRAM REVIEW; ASSESSMENT, AND USE OF DATA AND EVIDENCE (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 4.1-4.7)**

CSU Bakersfield has a broadly participatory, iterative, and comprehensive quality assurance system for academic programs, student affairs, and administrative units, grounded in five strategic goals articulated under President Horace Mitchell [link: [Strategic Goals](#)]. Each goal is premised on the University's evolving mission and continuous quality improvement.

Central to this culture of continuous improvement are the processes of annual assessment, annual review, and periodic review. These processes facilitate self-reflective and evidence-based decision-making at the unit, division, and institutional levels. This essay describes the institutional approach to quality assurance and improvement, and then details its effectiveness in sustaining a culture of continuous improvement in academic programs, student affairs, and administrative units. The essay concludes with a discussion of the role of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA).

### **6.1 INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 4.1-4.7)**

At CSU Bakersfield, quality assurance is strategically driven by the vice presidents for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Business and Administrative Services. Yearly reports are used to assess progress among and between division units, with implementation by committees and work groups, each with distinct approaches. Challenges since the quarter-to-semester conversion (Q2S) have included disseminating information across campus, identifying “closing the loop activities” at the unit, division, and university levels, and expanding measurement and evidence-building, in regard to University Learning Outcomes (ULOs). Key to addressing these challenges are the Faculty Assessment Coordinators (FACs) team; the University Program Review Committee (UPRC); the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment (IRPA); and the University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (USP-BAC). These committees convey University strategic initiatives and objectives to the individual units, and report results of compliance and quality improvement activities to decision-makers.

The institution fosters a culture of improvement through a three-step iterative process: annual student learning outcomes assessment, annual review, and periodic program review. 1) All academic programs are expected to engage annually in student learning outcomes assessment activities, with the goal of assessing all program learning outcomes within a five-year period. Annual assessment plans, assessment findings, action plans, and status reports are posted in Taskstream, our chosen Assessment Management System (AMS) [link: [Department Assessment Webpage](#)]. 2) At the end of each year, academic programs generate annual reports, including a summary of assessment activities and a narrative describing and reflecting on enrollment data, faculty teaching and scholarly/creative activities, and program community engagement activities [link: [Academic Program Annual Reports](#)]. Each annual report is posted in Taskstream with space for comments from the school dean. 3) Academic programs are expected to undergo program review every seven years. A central component of periodic program review is annual assessment, summarized in annual reports—documenting curricular

alignment, assessing student learning outcomes, and adjusting teaching and learning practices in response to data [link: [Academic Program Review Policy and Procedures](#)].

CSU Bakersfield's annual student learning outcomes assessment process is overseen by an eight-member Faculty Assessment Coordinators team: a faculty member from each of the four Schools (Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education); two faculty members who teach in the General Education program and in Extended University; the associate vice president of Student Affairs; and the assistant vice president of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) [link: [CSU Bakersfield Culture of Assessment](#)].

The Faculty Assessment Coordinators team was first established in 2013 with four FACs and the assistant vice president of IRPA. (Previously, a single faculty member served as the University Assessment Coordinator.) The four FACs provide assessment support to the faculty in their respective schools, with emphasis on promoting common discipline-based approaches to conducting assessment of student learning [[School FAC MOU doc. 4.6:32](#)], in the form of workshops, attendance at department meetings to discuss assessment, and one-on-one support to faculty and department chairs. Support centers on the assessment process, i.e., developing assessment plans, choosing and developing appropriate assessment tools, collecting and analyzing student learning artifacts, and closing the loop. The FACs report to the dean of their respective school. The assistant vice president of IRPA serves as the Assessment Coordinators team chair. IRPA generates several assessment status reports each academic year [link: [Assessment Status Reports](#)], manages our campus data management systems (Taskstream and Tableau), updates our campus assessment websites, and publishes a biannual campus assessment newsletter, *Context & Meaning* [[doc. 2.6:02](#) and [2.6:03](#)].

In preparing for the new GE program, AIMS (Achieving Integration & Mastering Skills), an additional FAC joined the team in 2014 [link: [CSU Bakersfield Culture of Assessment](#)]. The GE FAC provides assessment support to faculty teaching in GE, with an emphasis on assessment of student achievement of four of foundational skills (oral communication; written communication; critical thinking; quantitative reasoning) [[GE FAC MOU doc. 4.2:36](#)], by attending GE curriculum committee (GECCo) meetings, consulting with faculty Learning Community Facilitators (LCFs) and the GE faculty director, facilitating assessment workgroups to help faculty plan and analyze student learning artifacts, and planning professional development workshops for faculty to improve teaching and learning practices in response to assessment data. The GE FAC reports to the GE faculty director and the associate vice president for Academic Programs. In 2018, assessment coordinators for Extended University and Student Affairs [[Assessment Coordinators Meeting 04-06-2018 doc. 4.2:35](#)] joined the Assessment Coordinators team to improve communication about student learning between academic and co-curricular units, particularly with regard to addressing ULOs. (See section 6.3 for more information about assessment in Student Affairs.)

CSU Bakersfield's periodic program review process is overseen by the University Program Review Committee (UPRC) with assistance from the Office of Academic Programs [[UPRC charge doc. 4.2:28](#)]. This committee is comprised of two faculty members from each of the four

schools (Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education), an at-large member, and a representative chosen by the Academic Senate. The Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, or his representative, serves as an ex officio non-voting member of the UPRC. Further detail on program review is provided in section 6.2.2 below.

In the non-academic areas managed through Student Affairs and Business and Administrative Services, a variety of external organizations require quality improvement data on annual and periodic bases, such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care. State and county annual inspections, financial audits, and compliance training programs also occur. Internally, the quality improvement process includes customer satisfaction surveys and need assessments.

## **6.2 ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

### **6.2.1 ANNUAL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 4.3, 4.4)**

In its 2016 response to our 2015 Interim Report, the WSCUC Commission praised CSU Bakersfield for “creating a well-crafted assessment process that is faculty ‘owned’ and that integrates quality assessment practices into the fabric of the university” [[WSCUC Letter to President doc. 4.2:43](#)]. At the same time, the Commission challenged the University to “increase consistency of measurement across departments and to emphasize direct assessment of student learning” [[WSCUC Letter to President doc. 4.2:43](#)].

The extent of faculty commitment to the annual outcomes assessment process is evidenced by high levels of reporting of annual assessment plans, findings, and improvement efforts. Academic programs consistently develop assessment plans, collect assessment data, and report their assessment findings into Taskstream: in 2010-11, 42 of 46 programs completed all tasks (91.3%); in 2011-12, 45 of 46 (97.8%); in 2012-13, 47 of 48 (97.9%); in 2013-14, 48 of 49 (98.0%); in 2014-15, 48 of 50 (96.0%); in 2015-16, 47 of 52 (90.4%); and in 2016-17, 43 of 53 (81.1%) [[link: Department Assessment Webpage](#)]. This data excludes programs on moratorium, run by Extended University and the GE program.

Furthermore, a high percentage of programs that collect assessment data complete the assessment process by developing action plans and reporting the status of those plans in Taskstream: in 2010-11, 41 of 42 (97.6%); in 2011-12, 44 of 45 (97.8%); in 2012-13, 47 of 47 (100%); in 2013-14, 46 of 48 (95.8%); in 2014-15, 43 of 48 (89.6%); in 2015-16, 32 of 47 (68.1%); and in 2016-17, 37 of 43 (86.0%) [[link: Department Assessment Webpage](#)]. The dip in completing the assessment process in AY 2015-16 is likely due to the quarter-to-semester (Q2S) conversion undertaken that year. Most academic programs underwent curricular transformation to prepare for the semester system, and some faculty regarded their 2015-2016 assessment data as less relevant to their new programs.

Academic programs report relying primarily on direct measures of student learning to assess program quality: in 2010-11, 175 of 181 (97%); in 2011-12, 166 of 175 (95%); in 2012-13, 197 of 204 (97%); in 2013-14, 235 of 245 (96%); in 2014-15, 116 of 181 (64%); in 2015-16, 142 of 167

(85%); and in 2016-17, 111 of 155 (72%) [Assessment measures docs for each year 2.6:31,32,33,34,35,36,37].

A significant change to program assessment has been to the GE program. Prior to fall 2016, student learning outcomes for the GE program were assessed at the course level [WASC ALA Report doc. 2.6:27], coordinated by eleven committees responsible for each of the GE and university-wide requirements: Area A; Area B/Theme 1; Area C/Theme 2; Area D/Theme 3; American Institutions-Government; American Institutions-History; Computer and Information Literacy; Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement; First-Year Experience; Gender, Race, & Ethnicity; and Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement. From 2010-11 through 2015-16, 119 of 171 course-level outcomes were assessed at least once. Of the outcomes not assessed, 48 are not part of the GE AIMS program and 14 have been integrated into other learning outcomes [GE Five-Year Assessment Plan 2010-11 through 2015-16 doc. 4.2:6].

While assessing the GE program at the course level allowed instructors to reflect on whether students met outcomes associated with the particular area requirement, it did not offer GE faculty an opportunity to reflect on whether students met the GE outcomes as a whole. Thus, instead of assessing at the course level, our new GE AIMS program is assessed at the program level [GE Assessment PowerPoint ppt. 2.6:17]. On February 6, 2015, the GE Curriculum Committee (GECCo) approved ten GE Program Learning Outcomes (GE PLOs) for the AIMS program [GE Assessment Report August 2015 doc. 4.2:8]. These GE PLOs are mapped to the ULOs and a curriculum map is posted in Taskstream [link: General Education (GE) Curriculum Map]. A five-year assessment plan was developed, with the aim of assessing at least two GE PLOs each year, by collecting student artifacts completed at or near the time of graduation [link: GE Assessment Plan 2015-16 through 2020-21]. Thus far, this strategy is working smoothly.

In 2015-16, baseline assessment data about General Education was collected, assessed, and reported in Taskstream, focusing on the first four GE PLOs that emphasize oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning. The artifacts assessed were collected from students at or near the time of graduation. In response to the data, a number of closing the loop initiatives were implemented, for example, the development of Faculty Learning Communities and professional development workshops to support the reinforcement of oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning skills throughout the AIMS curriculum, and providing Supplemental Instruction (see Essay 5) to students in courses that introduce critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills [link: GE Assessment Webpage 2015-16 Cycle].

In 2016-17, GE PLOs 2A (Students will apply the principles, concepts, and methods of the natural sciences, arts and humanities, and social and behavioral sciences) and 3B (Students will explain key historical events and institutions of the United States) were assessed. These PLOs were chosen because, unlike a number of other PLOs, they had not changed much from the former GE program. The artifacts assessed for PLO 2A were collected from students at or near the time of graduation. The artifacts for PLO 3B were collected from students completing their American Institutions requirements. In response to the data, a “Just-in-Time” teaching pilot was launched in 2017-2018 to improve student learning outcomes in American Institutions

courses. Additionally, a pilot assessment of GE PLO 3A (Students will employ strategies for self-knowledge and lifelong learning) was conducted to determine the feasibility of using ePortfolios to collect student artifacts [link: [GE Assessment Webpage 2016-17 Cycle](#)].

The designation of Faculty Assessment Coordinators (FACs) for each of the four schools (Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education) and for the GE program has helped CSU Bakersfield sustain assessment efforts across both graduate and undergraduate programs and promoted the use of direct measures of student learning. Advantages of the Assessment Coordinator team model include (1) the development of a culture of assessment across academic programs, which views assessment efforts as grounded in and responsive to disciplinary methods and values, (2) improved access to and responsiveness from assessment leaders who work one-on-one with program chairs and faculty to help them develop, based on current levels of engagement in assessment, and (3) proliferation of multiple, discipline-based methods for assessing student learning. Limitations of this strategy include (1) turnover among FACs, resulting in gaps in assessment efforts and confusion about who occupies the role and (2) increased costs associated with reassigned time and assessment training for a FAC pool.

### **6.2.2 ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 4.1-4.7)**

CSU Bakersfield regards Academic Program Review as central to quality assurance and continual improvement. It provides the evidentiary basis for informed, transparent, and accountable decisions about programs, faculty and student needs, curricular planning, and resource management. This faculty-led peer review process utilizes evidence-based claims for academic planning and decision making and requires faculty to candidly reflect on their program's mission, goals, activities, and accomplishments through outcomes-based assessment of student learning. Ultimately, the process aims to maintain and strengthen the quality of the university's curriculum and meet the needs of the region [link: [Academic Program Review Policy and Procedures](#)].

The Academic Program Review process requires that academic programs submit a self-study to the University Program Review Committee (UPRC) every seven years [link: [Academic Program Review Process](#)]. The UPRC carefully reviews each self-study, which must address (1) the mission, goals, role, and function of the program, and its relationship to the University's goals and mission; and (2) the program's student learning outcomes, their assessment, and changes in the curriculum brought about by this assessment, reflecting upon measures of student involvement in scholarship and/or creative activities as well as evidence of alumni and employer satisfaction. Data on student retention and graduation rates, time to degree, and units at graduation is provided and analyzed in terms of program effectiveness. Finally, evidence is expected of the scholarship and creative activity of faculty members of the program, community service activities, internships, partnerships with the community, and grant activities. Programs are also asked to reflect upon efforts to diversify both student and faculty populations.

A second key component of the Academic Program Review process is the invitation of an external reviewer to assess the program, including any graduate programs. The external reviewer examines the self-study and then visits campus to discuss issues with program faculty, the dean, students, and sometimes community members. The reviewer also discusses assessment activities with both the program and the relevant FAC. A complete external review report is

submitted, and an exit interview is conducted with the provost, program faculty, the dean, and the UPRC Chair. The reviewer shares observations and raises questions to the provost, and the UPRC includes the external review report in its deliberations.

Following the external review, the UPRC composes a letter outlining the committee's observations, comments, and recommendations, which usually address possible areas of improvement as well as support for or reservations about program requests concerning new positions and developments. This letter goes to the associate vice president for Academic Programs, the dean, and the program. At the close of the process, the Provost meets with the program and dean to develop a plan for the next seven years, including any requests for new positions. This final step is referred to as a MOUAP (Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan), which facilitates transparency and accountability by tying together the recommendations for program improvement with budgeting, faculty lines, and space requirements.

Programs with external accreditation requirements are excused from duplicating information for external accreditation in their program review process. Appropriate elements of accreditation documents may be submitted with program review materials within the self-study [[Academic Program Review Policy and Procedures doc. 4.6:30](#)], e.g. information on students, faculty, resources, and enrollments compiled by IRPA, which forms the basis for annual reports, reflection on assessment of student learning outcomes, and strategic planning for the future.

The Academic Program Review process was particularly challenging during the quarter-to-semester (Q2S) conversion. Because many faculty members were occupied with the work involved in Q2S, the UPRC maintained its commitment to the period program review process by suggesting strategies for making the process manageable for programs undergoing review during that time [[link: UPRC Q2S Letter](#)]. These strategies included (1) providing a Program Review Template for the self-study, with suggested page limits for each section, totaling a maximum of 50 pages, excluding graphs and tables, and (2) encouraging programs undergoing review in 2014-15 and 2015-16 to adapt, for the self-study, documents already produced for curricular conversion and transformation for the semester system.

The number of programs reviewed averages five per year [[UPRC Trend Analysis doc. 4.2:27](#)]. In 2013-2014, two program reviews were completed: nursing and sociology. In 2014-2015, seven were: MS Administration Online; BS/MA business administration; BA/MA history; BA human biology; BA/MA interdisciplinary studies; BA philosophy; and BA liberal studies. In 2015-16, five were: BA global intelligence; MSW social work; special education; and educational counseling. In 2016-17, five were: BS chemistry and biochemistry; MA educational administration; BA criminal justice; teacher education single subject; and teacher education multiple subject. In 2017-2018, five were: BA art; BA/MA English; BA/MPA public administration; BS physical education and kinesiology; and the Helen Hawk honors program.

In May 2018, the Office of Academic Programs completed a UPRC Trend Analysis Report for 2013-2014 through 2017-2018 [[UPRC Trend Analysis doc. 4.2:27](#)]. The report focuses on five key data points: (1) length of time from receipt of self-study to external review visit; (2) length of time between external review visit and receipt of external review report; (3) length of time from external review report to UPRC report; (4) total time from receipt of self-study to UPRC report; and (5) total time from UPRC report to MOUAP. Findings included: 1) time from receipt of self-study to receipt of external report has varied widely, from 1.5 to 9.5 months. In response, the UPRC requested that departments identify and schedule the external reviewer at the time that

the self-study is submitted. 2) Time from receipt of self-study to UPRC report decreased markedly, peaking at 16 months in 2013-14 and dropping as low as 5.5 months in 2017-18. In response, the UPRC requested that the recent practice of having the UPRC Chair and member responsible for drafting the UPRC's letter attend the external reviewer Exit session continue.

### **6.3 ASSESSMENT IN STUDENT AFFAIRS**

The Division of Student Affairs engages in assessment activities that evaluate the impact of programs and services on student learning, growth, and development. Each unit is responsible for identifying the student learning outcome(s) to be measured, developing a plan to assess it/them, and utilizing the data collected to improve programs and services provided to students.

#### **6.3.1 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT (CFR 4.2-4.4)**

Since 2013, each unit in the division of Student Affairs is expected to submit an annual report to the vice president for Student Affairs (VPSA). This report includes four sections: (1) the unit's key accomplishments; (2) summary of attainment of previous year's goals; (3) summary of goals for the upcoming year; and (4) key data points discovered during review of assessment data. All annual reports are condensed by the office of the VPSA into an annual report known as the Student Affairs Accomplishments Booklet [link: [Student Affairs Website](#)], which is published both online and in print, with wide distribution across campus, as well as to the CSU Office of the Chancellor, alumni, parents, and members of the greater-Bakersfield community.

Assessment support for Student Affairs units is provided by the Student Affairs Assessment Council (SAAC), which includes the Director of the Student Union and the Executive Director of Associated Students, Inc. In 2018, the SAAC sponsored an assessment training attended by representatives from each unit, which resulted, with the support of the VPSA, in adding to the annual report the identification of one or more ULOs that the unit supports through its programs and services for assessment. This addition allows each unit to monitor the learning outcomes selected for measurement, report assessment findings, and interpret results for impact on practice. The SAAC also developed a new survey for assessing the impact of the Student Affairs division, called the Annual Assessment of Student Engagement, which is administered with assistance from IRPA using the cloud-based survey tool Qualtrics. Every CSU Bakersfield student is invited to complete the survey through an emailed link. Although results from the first survey are not yet compiled, the response rate is promising (16% of all students).

#### **6.3.2 PERIODIC REVIEW (CFR 4.1-4.7)**

Several units in the division of Student Affairs undergo periodic review by accrediting agencies and national governing associations. CSU Bakersfield Student Health Services is accredited every three years by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and Western Athletic Conference (WAC) sponsor various accrediting activities for Athletics. The Counseling Center is not accredited but undergoes periodic mandatory review by the CSU Chancellor's Office. The Children's Center undergoes consistent program review through state and federal agencies. Auxiliary units in the

division (Student Union, Associated Students, Inc., and the Student Recreation Center) also undergo consistent review by independent auditors hired by the CSU Chancellor's Office.

Several internal reviews have been undertaken by CSU Bakersfield graduate students in public administration and healthcare administration, providing data for evidence-based decision making in the division of Student Affairs. For example, a survey of the availability of feminine hygiene supplies and a report of student preferences for lactation stations were developed and submitted to the director for equity, inclusion and compliance. As a result of these efforts, Student Affairs worked with Facilities Management to stock supplies in restrooms across campus [link: [Availability of Pads/Tampons on Campus](#)] and establish two additional lactation/nursing rooms [link: [Resources for Pregnant & Nursing Students at CSU Bakersfield](#)]. Also, Student Health Services has intern partnerships and clinical practitioners with the graduate program in health care administration and nursing, respectively. Recent studies focused on improvement in HPV vaccine education, sexual assault services, high Body Mass Index (BMI) and high blood pressure screening. In response, Student Health Services changed procedures and chart template notes to improve services for students. Examples include a new written policy and chart templates for responding to victims of sexual assault, and referrals for nutritional counseling for students with high BMI or blood pressure.

## **6.4 ASSESSMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS (NON-STUDENT AFFAIRS)**

### **6.4.1 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT (CFR 4.2-4.4)**

Annual assessment of Business and Administrative Services occurs at both middle management and administrative levels. Examples of assessments implemented by Facilities Management, University Police, and Information Technology Services (ITS) are featured here.

Pursuant to Executive Order 847, Facilities Management submits to the Chancellor's Office an Annual Deferred Maintenance Report (which provides a five-year projection of deferred maintenance and capital renewal costs of facilities and infrastructure based upon the life cycle of major building and utility subsystems, including fixed maintained equipment) and a Biennial Facilities Audit [EO 847 doc 4.2:24] (which assesses each facility to identify maintenance/repair requirements in the scheduled maintenance program and provides an audit and listing of fixed maintained equipment). Facilities Management also annually reviews its policy manual (including policies for software programs, work order backlogs, chargebacks, the Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), completion of work requests, inventory and purchasing, key administration, utility reporting, power outage, HVAC, space heaters, and motor vehicle inspections [Facilities Policy Review Plan doc 4.2:22]) and annually surveys faculty and staff on customer service satisfaction [Facilities Survey Report docs 4.2.37,38,39].

CSU Bakersfield's University Police Department (UPD) publishes Annual Security Reports (ASRs) for the main campus and the Antelope Valley campus in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policies and Campus Crime Statistics Act. The ASR is prepared in collaboration with Student Housing and Residence Life, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Human Resources, Office of the Provost, Student Affairs, and local law enforcement agencies. Each unit provides updated information to the UPD and the Office of the

President [CSU Bakersfield Annual Security Report docs 4.2:[41-42](#)]. The ASR is made available to the campus in electronic and print formats [link: [Annual Security Reports](#)] and the website address is included on CSU Bakersfield employment applications and job announcements for faculty positions.

Under the organizing principle, “Excellent and Student Success,” Information Technology Services (ITS) identifies five strategic goals for its unit and provides annual reports identifying the unit’s accomplishments for that year and priorities for the following year [link: [ITS 2016-2017 Annual Report](#)]. Starting July 1, 2017, ITS began tracking specific “S.M.A.R.T.” automated metrics that are specific, measurable, attainable, repeatable and timely to meet these five strategic goals [2017-2018 ITS Metrics doc 4.2:40] and assist the campus in accomplishing the aims of the Graduation 2025 Initiative.

#### **6.4.2 PERIODIC REVIEW (CFR 4.1-4.7)**

Periodic review of units in Business and Administrative Services is managed through external and internal processes. Examples of external reviews include audits administered by the Office of Audit and Advisory Services regarding Emergency Management, IT Disaster Recovery, Payment Card Processing, Scholarships, Student Activities, and Construction [Audit docs 4.2:[29,30,31,32,33,34](#)]. In response to resulting recommendations, the University has made numerous policy and process improvements such as: (1) filling all vacant building marshal positions and developing a process to biannually confirm the accuracy of the building marshal’s roster [[Audit - Emergency Management 4.2:29](#)]; (2) creating and testing a comprehensive Information Technology Disaster Recovery (ITDR) plan [[Audit - IT Disaster Recovery 4.2:30](#)]; (3) establishing a formal governance structure to ensure that all Payment Card Industry (PCI) requirements are addressed on an annual and ongoing basis [[Audit - Payment Card Processing 4.2:31](#)]; and (4) updating campus policy regarding Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention (ATOD) programming, including a requirement that all student activities officers and advisors complete the training [[Audit - Student Activities 4.2:33](#)].

Internally, the University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (USP-BAC), which meets at least twice per year, monitors progress towards achievement of the University’s goals and objectives, including the review of institutional metrics and data, and provides input on budgetary strategy. USP-BAC advises the president on budget matters and makes recommendations to support the academic mission in light of fiscal challenges and opportunities. The spring meeting emphasizes the campus strategic plan, and the fall meeting emphasizes the budget [link: [University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee](#)].

The membership of USP-BAC is broad, with representatives from all areas of the university, including senior leadership from Student Affairs, University Advancement, the Academic Senate, Associated Students, Inc., Athletics, Human Resources, the CSU Bakersfield Foundation Board, the President Community Advisory Committee, IPRA, Enrollment Management, WSCUC Accreditation, and Public Affairs and Communications, as well as two school deans and the dean of CSU Bakersfield Antelope Valley. [link: [University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee](#)]. In 2018, USP-BAC leadership was revised to

replace the university president as chair with the provost/vice president for Academic Affairs and the vice president for Business and Administrative Services as co-chairs.

## **6.5 INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT (IRPA)**

CSU Bakersfield's Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) provides information and data analysis in support of budgeting, operations, planning, and policy determinations at the university. This office maintains databases of historical and current facts about the University including applications, enrollments, degrees granted, demographics, test scores, grades, courses, and outcomes. IRPA conducts surveys of students and faculty for the assessment of programs and services and provides feedback for quality improvement. Planning staff also provide consultation to other campus units in conducting assessments of their programs and technical support in data analysis and reporting [link: [IRPA Website](#)]. IRPA is staffed by three research assistants, a research associate, an analyst/programmer, an administrative support assistant, and an assistant vice president [link: [IRPA Staff](#)].

IRPA's mission is to support evidence-based planning and decision-making at CSU Bakersfield through a comprehensive and integrated program of research, planning, and assessment. The office is also charged with reporting official student and academic information to the CSU Chancellor's Office and other outside organizations. IRPA accomplishes these goals by collaborating across the campus, providing data, analyses, information, and support for planning, evaluation and assessment, mandated reporting, policy development, accreditation efforts, program reviews, and other reporting needs [link: [IRPA Mission Statement](#)].

### **6.5.1 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING (CFR 2.10 and 4.2)**

IRPA plays a pivotal role in collecting, coordinating, and analyzing data about and for the university and serves as the chief information clearinghouse for disseminating information and reports to campus administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as to external constituents. The reports may be standardized and regularly scheduled or ad hoc for specific purposes, such as grant applications or departmental initiatives. IRPA also manages institutional compliance and reporting obligations to federal and state agencies and the CSU Chancellor's Office, and supplies information in keeping with university policy and privacy standards to external publications such as the Common Data Set, College Board, ACT, Peterson's, Wintergreen Orchard House, and the *US News & World Report*.

Good organizational intelligence that looks both inward and outward is crucial to the management of strategic change at the university. IRPA staff provide support for Taskstream, a cloud-based software that allows faculty and staff to map PLOs to ULOs, archive course syllabi and other curricular documents, report annual assessment plans, findings, actions plans, and status reports, and generate analytics, which compile assessment data across units. In recent years, IRPA moved from producing mostly PDF reports to developing a "self-service" Tableau website. This program-planning data software provides interactive data tables on admissions, enrollment, and graduation that users can explore to drill down to the school and department

levels. The data can also be analyzed by student level, gender, and ethnicity to help faculty and administrators understand patterns of student progress and barriers to graduation.

IRPA publishes key data on its website, a centralized repository including information about student learning outcomes, assessment plans, activities and resources, and use of student learning evidence. Academic quality outcome measures are used for external purposes, such as the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification Application; the CSU System-wide Voluntary System of Accountability; the CSU comparative analysis IPEDS; and the nine degree programs at CSU Bakersfield with national accreditations—BS in business administration, chemistry, and nursing; MS programs in counseling, education, public administration, and social work, and the MBA. It also includes the University's strategic planning success indicator reports; National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) findings; and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a survey conducted each year by the National Center for Education Statistics. Finally, IRPA's website provides links to the CSU Student Success Dashboard, the College Portrait, and the Student Achievement Measure (SAM).

### **6.5.2 DATA COLLECTION IN SUPPORT OF REPORTING (CFR 2.10 and 4.2)**

IRPA contributes substantially to building a culture of evidence, collecting and reporting data using standardized instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA); the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); and Common Data Set, a college guide developed by the College Board. IRPA has developed a variety of surveys in the past five years, including the Graduation Student Survey [link: [Student and Campus Data](#)]; alumni surveys with custom reports for the Center for Community Engagement and Career Education (CECE) [link: [CSU Bakersfield Infographics](#)]; and degree program student satisfaction surveys. IRPA also regularly disseminates enrollment information to the president's cabinet, deans, and the budget office for enrollment planning and budget projections, and creates program profiles that provide data for annual department/program reports to the deans and provost [link: [Program Profiles](#)].

The assistant vice president for IRPA sits on the Graduation Taskforce, the campus group driving the Graduation 2025 Initiative, and regularly shares data about paths to improve student persistence and graduation rates. IRPA supports departments as they write program review self-studies by supplying a suite of data that correlates with the program review template. Staff also respond to data requests from departments as needed for the program review process.

Examples of ad hoc IRPA reports include analysis of student attrition/retention outcomes and engagement, and assessment of pilot programs and graduation initiatives. IRPA provided data to support institutional decision-making and student success in light of the fall 2016 graduation initiative [link: [Graduation and Retention Rates](#)]. IRPA also conducted an analysis of the block scheduling pilot program, an initiative of the Graduation Taskforce, which paved the way to continue block scheduling for incoming freshmen [link: [Block Scheduling Evaluation](#)]. And in support of the campus initiative on advising, IRPA conducted surveys to assist in planning improvements to the advising system [link: [Campus Conversation on Advising](#)].

### **6.5.3 DATA ACCESS AND DISSEMINATION TO CAMPUS STAKEHOLDERS (CFR 4.6 and 4.7)**

IRPA has also developed collaborative campus partnerships to drive decision-making, develop quality assurance, and promote student success. Collecting quality, accessible and actionable data for the campus community is a consistent objective. The University recognizes that data-informed decision-making is crucial to implementing its strategic plan, maintaining and improving the quality of its academic programs, making strides in its graduation and student success goals, and cultivating a welcoming campus community. The assistant vice president regularly communicates in public forums like the Department Chair Leadership Council (DCLC) and Academic Senate subcommittees, sits on the provost's team, and manages data requests for accreditation reports at the institutional, school, and department levels.

Quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts are publicized through a newsletter, *Context & Meaning*, published by IRPA [link: [Assessment Newsletter](#)]. This biannual publication contains articles written by the members of the Assessment Coordinators team, sharing information on how programs are engaging in the assessment process and using assessment data to improve pedagogy, programs, and services at the university. The newsletter is available in online and print format for internal and external campus constituencies.

#### **6.5.4 PERIODIC REVIEW (CFR 4.1)**

The assistant vice president of IRPA and the functions related to IRPA are evaluated and reviewed annually by the provost. The IRPA office has not been reviewed yet. A review process is under discussion and will be implemented.

#### **6.6 CONCLUSIONS**

As evidenced above, CSU Bakersfield has a broadly participatory, iterative, and comprehensive quality assurance system grounded in our five strategic goals. Processes of annual assessment and review and periodic review demonstrate our commitment to quality assurance and a culture of continuous improvement in academic programs, student affairs division, and administrative units. Nevertheless, several areas of concern merit special attention.

First, in recent years, the state's financial recession, a changing funding model for education, and the campus conversion from a quarter to semester system severely impacted CSU Bakersfield's ability to recruit, hire, and maintain its workforce. In the past three years, retirements have occurred at all levels. In Academic Affairs, faculty committed to assessment and quality improvement—champions—have been lost and new leadership has emerged. Partly to address these losses, an Assessment Coordinators team was formed, bringing together the Faculty Assessment Coordinators (FACs) from each of the four schools (Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education), a Faculty Assessment Coordinator for GE, and, most recently, Assessment Coordinators for Extended University and Student Affairs. While the introduction of unit-based assessment leaders has allowed faculty and staff to develop multiple, discipline-based strategies for assessing student learning, these strategies have not yet been fully integrated with the University Strategic Plan.

The campus shift to semesters, implemented in 2016-17, impacted assessment and other campus initiatives. On the positive side, the conversion inspired many programs to deeply reflect upon their program's effectiveness and use assessment data to drive program transformation. On the negative side, an increased need to hire adjuncts and temporary instructors in large numbers diverted the energy and attention of permanent faculty. Part-time and temporary faculty are not oriented toward nor expected to assume responsibility for strategic objectives. New faculty hiring efforts are likely to improve tenure density and add new energy to assessment efforts. In 2017-18, 15 tenure track and 10 full-time lecturers were added. In 2018-19, hiring plans include 39 new tenure track faculty and 2 additional full-time lecturers.

Opportunities for faculty to complete assessment training have been dispersed throughout the institution. Faculty teaching online courses receive assessment training through the Quality Matters Summer Institute; faculty teaching in the GE program receive assessment training through faculty-facilitated Learning Communities (LCs) and assessment workgroups; and assessment leads within programs receive one-on-one assistance as needed from their school Faculty Assessment Coordinator (FAC). The next step for the Assessment Coordinators team is to collaborate with the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center to schedule assessment training programs for new faculty as part of the annual new faculty orientation, to provide regular program assessment trainings throughout the academic year, and to develop assessment themes aligned with the University Strategic Plan.

The CSU Chancellor's Office strategic initiatives on timely graduation, degree completion, and remediation have focused campus data collection on these initiatives and requirements for new and different outcome data. Unfortunately, this emphasis on data collection has slowed down progress toward evidence-based decision-making as resources for measuring, assessing, and interpreting data have not yet increased. The IRPA unit and the IRPA director are crucial in both generating data and communicating evidence.

Finally, most units at CSU Bakersfield—academic and non-academic—are engaged in either quality measurement or surveys to gauge satisfaction with service. Some areas analyze data and develop quality improvement efforts. However, these efforts are not necessarily linked across or through the structural units of the university.

To promote best practices in assessment and disseminate program assessment results, IRPA now publishes a biennial newsletter, *Context & Meaning*, and has created websites with assessment information for academic programs, including the new GE program, Achieving Integration & Mastering Skills (AIMS). A webpage for Student Affairs assessment is also planned. Additionally, to improve the efficiency of the program review process, the University Program Review Committee (UPRC) produced a trend analysis on completion of program reviews and plans to implement the resulting recommendations to streamline the process. Overall, there is widespread awareness at CSU Bakersfield that information, especially data-based evidence, must be disseminated widely to internal and external campus constituencies.

## **ESSAY 7 – SUSTAINABILITY: FINANCIAL VIABILITY; PREPARING FOR THE CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT (CFRS 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 4.1, 4.3-4.7)**

CSU Bakersfield's approach to long-term financial viability depends upon the continued support of the State of California and the Chancellor's Office, and support from our stakeholders, including tuition and fees from students. The state of California and CSU Bakersfield students have entrusted the university with resources, which must be effectively and judiciously allocated to expand educational opportunities in this region.

### **7.1 FINANCIAL POSITION (CFR 3.4 and 4.6)**

The California State University (CSU) System was created in 1960 to provide quality and affordable education in the State of California. The CSU is the largest four-year public university system in the world, and one of the most diverse university systems in the U.S. With approximately 3.4 million alumni, it is estimated that one in every 20 college graduates in the country is a CS graduate. In 2016-2017, the CSU educated over 472,000 students. For every \$1 invested in the CSU, it is estimated that \$5.43 is invested back into the California's economy [CSU Financial Statements doc. 3.4:26].

CSU Bakersfield was founded in 1965. The University serves approximately 11,000 students on its main and Antelope Valley campuses. The University aims to provide financial transparency, integrity, and funding for future strategic initiatives to increase growth and diversity in learning experiences for our students and community [link: [CSU Bakersfield Strategic Plan](#)].

In the 2017-18 state budget, the state of California allocated approximately \$6.4 billion to the CSU system. The system also received one-time funding of approximately \$75 million to support the system-wide Graduation Initiative 2025 to align graduation rates with national averages. An additional \$20 million was provided for enrollment growth, the equivalent of 2,500 full-time students or 3,000 headcount [link: [CSU State Budget](#)]. CSU Bakersfield received approximately \$126 million of these funds, including \$2.4 million related to the graduation initiative and \$564,000 for enrollment growth [CSU Bakersfield Final Budget Memo 3.4:24]. For the 2018-19 budget year, the CSU Board of Trustees requested a \$282.9 million budget increase to support the Graduation Initiative 2025, compensation, enrollment growth, facilities and infrastructure needs, and mandatory costs [CSU Bakersfield One-time allocation xls. 3.4:25]. The governor approved only \$92.1 million of the request. This created a system-wide budget deficit of approximately 1.4%, which poses problems for the system as well as for CSU Bakersfield.

Despite continuing increase in higher education costs, budget constraints and concerns regarding state support, CSU Bakersfield is committed to academic excellence, preparation of students for future careers, and a vision of providing more access to all first-time freshman and upper-division transfer students who meet CSU's admission requirements within the local service region. CSU Bakersfield remains an affordable option in higher education.

A newly released report by the California Department of Education shows that Kern County's high school graduation rate is 79.8 percent, an increase of 3.4 percent over last year. Kern High

School District (KHSD), among the largest high school districts in the nation, has nearly 40,000 enrolled students. KHSD graduation rate is 84.4 percent, an increase of 4.8 percent from last year. With the exception of nursing, CSU Bakersfield remains an un-impacted campus. This status has resulted in significant enrollment growth, exceeding funded enrollment targets (from 6,681 in fall 2012 to 7,724 in fall 2017). In this period, headcount increased by 13.6% while full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment increased by 8.5%.

The institution is financially stable and has multiple revenue streams to support its operations. As of June 30, 2017, CSU Bakersfield had combined net assets of \$66.8 million. Net assets consist of funding from the state (\$23.2 million) and auxiliary organizations (\$43.6 million), including student self-governance, the student union and recreation center, philanthropic activities, and externally supported research and sponsored program [[CSU Financial Statements doc.3.4:26](#)].

With concerns regarding state support, CSU Bakersfield has been reviewing initiatives to reduce costs and diversify its financial resources. These initiatives include increased use of technology to streamline processes, transparency in financial reporting with budget software, campus engagement in and awareness of the budget process, and the implementation of a salary management tool to gain a better understanding of salary costs. In the past year, the University president and vice president of Business Administrative Services conducted periodic budget forum meetings to allow the campus to voice concerns and priorities regarding budget funding [[link: Webcast CSU Bakersfield Budget Forum](#)]. Information regarding the budget is made readily available to campus on the Budget Central website [[link: CSU Bakersfield Budget Central website](#)]. Departments are also requested to review actuals compared to budget dollars on a regular basis. These enhancements have allowed the University to address fiduciary concerns in a timelier fashion.

In addition, the CSU Bakersfield Budget & Planning Committee makes recommendations to the Academic Senate on all policies and procedures related to setting institutional priorities, allocating and utilizing university resources, approving the Academic Master Plan and new academic programs, reviewing existing programs, and responding to needs of the service region. The committee also monitors the university's planning processes and coordinates revisions to the Mission and Goals Statement [[link: CSU Bakersfield Budget and Planning website](#)]. The University continues to review other opportunities to diversify its funding sources. This diversification includes expanding programming in Extended University [[link: CSU Bakersfield EUD website](#)], increasing philanthropic efforts, and encouraging faculty to secure grants [[link: Grants and Sponsored Awards](#)].

## **7.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL CAMPUS (CFRs 3.5, 4.6, and 4.7)**

The Board of Trustees approved the physical plans for the construction of the CSU Bakersfield campus in the spring of 1969. It opened in September 1970 as the 19th campus of the CSU system, with an initial size of 92,000 square feet and 859 enrolled students. During the first decade, additional classroom facilities were built, including general lecture (Dorothy Donahoe Hall), science, and physical education facilities. Over the next 40 years, the campus continued

to grow to meet the needs of the community. The Icardo Center athletic facility, the Education building, the Music addition, the Walter Stiern Library, and the Business Development Center were built in the late 1980s and 1990s. In the 21st century, the campus has continued to expand: in 2009, a state-of-the-art, 75,000-square-foot Student Recreation Center was built; the Visual Arts Center, opened in 2014, includes specialized studio/lab environments for work in ceramics, sculpture, painting, drawing, and digital art; in January 2015, students moved into Student Housing East, a three-building housing complex on the northeast side of campus; and, in Fall 2017, faculty and staff in the School of Arts & Humanities moved into a new 13,865-square-foot Humanities Office Building, designated as LEED Gold equivalent, which replaced the seismically deficient Faculty Towers, which has been demolished.

The current facilities Master Plan is approved for an enrollment of 18,000 students within the next 15 to 20 years. One challenge with such growth is classroom space. The CSU Bakersfield Classroom Task Force has been developing standards and recommendations for the administration to consider during the next phase of our facilities Master Planning process.

In 2016, the campus underwent a planning process to determine the next academic building to that should be added to campus [[link: Academic Facilities Master Plan website](#)]. The process engaged both internal and external constituencies in visualizing the next facility, through the use of conversation and data [[Academic Facilities Master Plan doc. 4.6:38](#)]. Three proposals were developed in consultation with the faculty, for a new Media and Performing Arts Center [[doc. 4.6:36](#)], a new Social Sciences and Education Building [[doc. 4.6:39](#)], and an Energy and Engineering Innovation Center [[doc. 4.6:37](#)]. The last proposal was selected for further development, while the other two will be priorities for later growth.

The Energy and Engineering Innovation Center will support modern, high-impact practices in teaching; cutting-edge, collaborative, interdisciplinary research; and community outreach and partnerships. It will house the Department of Physics and Engineering, the California Energy Research Center (CERC), the Fab Lab (an advanced digital-fabrication laboratory sponsored by MIT's Center for Bits and Atoms), and the School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering (NSME) Office of Grants and Outreach. It will also include teaching laboratories, student-faculty research labs, and a 240-seat auditorium for the entire university.

Future academic projects will include the proposed Social and Behavioral Sciences Building to consolidate instructional space and faculty offices for the Social and Behavioral Sciences program in a new centralized building. The Media and Performing Arts Center will provide a new two-story building with a state-of-the-art communications facility on the second floor and multiple performance spaces on the first floor. The facilities in the Center will support the public relations, journalism, digital media, film, GE, theatre, music, and liberal studies programs. The Renaissance Hall project will provide a new three-story multi-purpose building to promote collaboration and social spaces and community interaction, including a Welcome Center, a new home for the Academic Advising and Resource Center, and café spaces. The first floor will include spaces for large events and conferences. Upper floors will include inter-departmental classrooms, faculty offices, and student support spaces. The Faculty Office Building, a new three-story faculty office and administration building, is planned adjacent to the newly

constructed Humanities Complex. In addition to the new academic facilities, two new student residence halls are also being planned in the northeast area of campus and initial planning has begun on the renovation and expansion of the Student Union facility.

One of CSU Bakersfield's self-supported projects is the University Police Relocation. This project will expand and relocate the University Police Department and Emergency Operations Center to a more visible, accessible location. The project will renovate an existing modular building and provide parking for police equipment and vehicles.

In late 2015, CSU Bakersfield created a two-tiered governance structure to support and champion information technology and to deliver those services sufficient in scope, quality and currency to support the institution's academic and administrative needs. The Information Technology Committee (ITC) discusses issues, challenges, needs and opportunities that should be realized to support the campus community [[ITC Charter doc. 3.4:31](#)], with faculty representation from each school and academic leadership from the library, Instructional Development, Academic Operations and Support, Sponsored Program Administration, Enrollment Management, and Institutional Research, as well as representation from Associated Students, Inc., and the Student Affairs division. This cross-sectional committee develops an annual roadmap and funding requests, and sets priorities in funding for information technology projects and services to benefit student, faculty, and staff in achieving our campus strategic objectives. The funding requests are discussed and prioritized by the University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, with the president making the final decision.

Within the ITS Roadmap, CSU Bakersfield has identified permanent funds to invest in the quality and currency of our instructional facilities and computer labs, providing students with access to up-to-date computers, software, and high-speed internet. Investments also aim to increase the availability and proliferation of the campus wireless network, the primary network for learning and extra-curricular activities [[ITC Roadmap 3.4:34](#)].

CSU Bakersfield has also invested in moving campus services to the cloud, notably the Learning Management System, Blackboard, adding to the reliability and availability of technology services to our students and faculty. Faculty who wish to teach online or in a hybrid course are required to be certified. The certification is provided by the Distributed Learning Committee (DLC), and the standard is informed by the Distributed Learning Policy. To date, 180 faculty have been certified to teach online/hybrid courses. There are also general workshops available on campus for tools and technology. To support the administrative tools for faculty, Office 365 training is offered several times per term. From 2015-2017, 107 faculty have attended general training courses to increase their proficiency with technologies.

### **7.3 THE DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSITY OF THE FACULTY AND STAFF (CFR 4.7)**

Faculty hiring can have a significant impact on the direction and growth of the University as it prepares to address new academic priorities as well as the availability of resources. The number of new hires grew significantly in academic year 2016-17. Full-time teaching faculty increased by 13.8% in 2016-17 compared to 2011-12. In 2016-17, 71% of all full-time faculty at CSUB were either tenured or on tenure-track. The comparable system-wide number is 79%.

This growth occurred in all four academic schools. Moreover, there was gender parity among the new hires in 2016-2017 [[Faculty and Staff Profile doc.4.7:26](#)].

A diverse faculty can benefit the university by uniquely engaging students in the classroom, improving student retention and degree completion rates, and enhancing campus pluralism. One of the more compelling arguments for diversity is the direct impact teaching practices have on student learning outcomes. Faculty members of color are more likely to engage students in classroom dialogue and provide additional readings on issues of race and ethnicity that challenge students' preconceived ideas of racial/ethnic groups. Unfortunately, the racial/ethnicity of faculty do not adequately reflect the student population [[Faculty and Staff Profile doc.4.7:26](#)]. The Faculty and Staff profile data shows that, in comparison to student body, African Americans and Hispanics are underrepresented in the faculty. The percentage of female faculty is also low in comparison to the student body. In contrast, the data indicates that 56% of the staff are non-Caucasian persons; the diversity of CSU Bakersfield's staff mirrors the diversity of the student body and overall community in Bakersfield.

#### **7.4 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING (CFRs 3.4, 3.7, 4.3, and 4.7)**

Over the last 15 years, CSU Bakersfield has employed a strategy to make the University more accessible to students in the region. Under President Horace Mitchell, the campus undertook a series of physical, programmatic, and cultural projects to support this strategic goal, including:

- Transitioning to a Division I Athletics program
- Constructing buildings for the schools of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering, and a new dormitory complex
- Expanding Discretionary Funding through Student-Supported Fee Initiatives
- Shifting some services to self-support status

In July of 2018, Dr. Lynnette Zelezny became the fifth permanent President of CSU Bakersfield and its first female President. Dr. Zelezny will lead the development of a new strategic vision and direction for the university in consultation with students and faculty.

Over the past decade, the funding model in the CSU has been an allocation-based model, whereby the governor and legislature negotiate in a process that considers state financial resources and priorities of the governmental and political systems. Generally, the model is increased or decreased incrementally from the base budget of the previous year. Funds are then controlled by the CSU Chancellor's Office and allocated to each campus based on enrollment growth [link: [CSU Budget webpage](#)]. The dissemination of funds from the Chancellor's Office has varied over the past decade, in both amount and timeliness.

CSU Bakersfield has entered most operational years with a picture of expenses from the past year, but no firm expectation of revenues for the new year. In some years, the base budget has been increased based on FTEs, while in other years the campus has been informed that FTEs increases would not be funded. Over the past decade, CSU Bakersfield has sometimes faced declining allocations, slow growth, and increased costs. About 90% of expenditures are for salaries and benefits, and 70% of revenues are from financial aid [[University Strategic Planning](#)]

and Budget Cmte. Presentation ppt. 3.4:29]. In the CSU Bakersfield service area, this has meant students and families must assume more of the financial responsibility for tuition, and the University has had to assume more responsibility for managing the structural imbalances.

In recent years, faculty have called upon the administration to improve transparency and shared governance by providing budget information across the university, as well as improving mechanisms to facilitate communication at all levels. The Academic Senate resolved “that faculty will actively participate in the annual university budgeting process, as indicated in the attached calendar; and ... that IRPA, and the Budget Office provide requested data, based on the timeline laid out in the annual budget calendar, to the Budget and Planning Committee (BPC) of the Academic Senate” [RES 171813 doc. 3.7:15]. In 2018, President Mitchell approved a new structure whereby the Chief Financial Officer would serve as an *ex officio* to the Academic Senate’s Budget and Planning Committee (BPC). The purpose of the change was to “...improve BAS understanding of faculty concerns and needs, and BPC’s understanding of campus budgetary resources, processes, and reporting” [RES 171810 doc. 3.7:14]. The campus expects these conversations to continue under the new Zelezny administration.

## **7.5 STRATEGIC RESOURCE DECISION-MAKING (CFRs 3.4, 4.3, and 4.6)**

The president is responsible for developing the strategic plan and delegating implementation of the plan to the University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (USP-BAC), a 31-member body that includes the president’s cabinet and other department and program representatives [University Strategic Planning and Budget Cmte. Charter doc. 3.4:27]. The USP-BAC was established with the intent to monitor progress towards the achievement of CSU Bakersfield’s strategic plan and related goals and objectives. The USP-BAC reviews the strategic plan and institutional metrics and data and provides input on the budget strategy. It makes budget priority recommendations to the president to support the strategic plan and academic mission and maintain institutional viability in light of fiscal challenges and opportunities. Recently the USP-BAC reorganized itself into two subgroups to focus attention on prioritizing strategic objectives and developing a communication structure that widely disseminates information regarding the outcomes, strengths, and limitations of the continuous quality improvement processes.

The USP-BAC puts shared governance into practice by gathering input regarding broad budget allocations [link: Campus Budget Forums]. As can be seen in the fiscal year 2017-18 University Budget Book, CSU Bakersfield had a total budget of \$130,170,509, of which \$69,228,454 (53%) was allocated to Academic Affairs. When this allocation is combined with the co-curricular allocations for Student Affairs (\$9,049,177), the total allocated to student learning and development is over 60% of the total university budget. This pattern of allocation is consistent with the current strategic vision of the university [link: 2017-18 Budget Book].

Because CSU Bakersfield’s tenure-track faculty are the foundation of its present and future success, the University has made a commitment to increase the percentage of faculty that are on the tenure track, also referred to as tenure-track density. In 2017-18, the Academic Senate conducted an analysis that compared the institution’s graduation rate to the campus-wide student-faculty ratio (SFR) [Faculty Hiring Initiative doc. 3:4.37]. In general, the analysis

demonstrated that as SFR increases there is a negative effect upon the institution's graduation rate. The Academic Senate passed Resolution #171809 in support of spending university resources to increase tenure-track density.

Tenure-track density peaked before the mid-decade recession at just under 70% [USPB 16/17 Budget Presentation ppt. 3.4:29]. By 2018, the CSU Bakersfield's tenure track density had fallen to 51.9%. Additional funding was dedicated to hire new tenure and tenure-track faculty lines in 2017-18 and 2018-19, in an effort to improve tenure density [Faculty and Staff Profile doc.4.7:26]. However, the tenure density at CSUB continues to decline. As demand grows, both from increased numbers of students and units taken per semester per student, additional lecturers as well as additional tenure-track faculty are hired, preventing the ratio from improving. In recognition of the importance of tenure-track faculty to the university, the campus-wide conversation on tenure density continues with CSU Bakersfield's new President Zelezny.

## **7.6 CAMPUS BUDGET PRACTICES (CFRs 3.4, 4.3 and 4.7)**

The CSU Chancellor's Office has established a budget oversight policy, ensuring that the chief financial officer on each campus certify that budget reviews occur during the fiscal year; compare budget, actual revenues, and expenditures; and take action to resolve any discrepancies in a timely manner [CSU Bakersfield Budget Oversight Policy doc. 3.4:36]. In addition, each campus is required to establish written policies and procedures reflecting the frequency of reviews to monitor budget performance. CSU Bakersfield has established a campus fiscal responsibility policy, stating that the campus will exercise appropriate fiscal responsibility over all funds appropriated to and/or, deposited within the campus [Fiscal Responsibility Policy doc. 3.4:35]. The annual university budget process fulfills the requirements of shared governance by gathering input from campus stakeholders, including the Academic Senate and the Information Technology Council (ITAC). The campus budget is then built in draft form and shared with the President's Cabinet before implementation [Budget Governance Process doc. 4.7:25]. Appropriate fiscal responsibility includes, but is not limited to, ensuring:

- Expenditures and expenditure commitments do not exceed available resources.
- Funds are expended for the purposes, and within the time periods intended.
- Internal controls are applied to protect campus funds from misuse.
- All receipts and expenditures are correctly classified to meet external reporting requirements and to provide for internal management reporting.
- Compliance with all CSU and campus policies relating to the collection, deposit, and expenditure of funds.

As part of its commitment to fiscal responsibility, the campus conducts several University-wide financial assessments annually, including a mid-year and year-end review. The financial assessment includes communication with the following representatives: campus president, division vice presidents and associate vice presidents and/or school deans, division and/or school budget liaisons, vice president for Business and Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer, associate vice president for Financial Services/Controller, University director of budget and budget analyst(s).

This policy has been established to ensure compliance with state and CSU system-wide agreements and to develop a mechanism for better understanding of the full cost of campus activities.

## **7.7 AUXILIARY RESOURCES (CFRs 3.4 and 4.3)**

Auxiliary organizations provide supplemental services and support to CSU Bakersfield, and are structured as legally separate non-profit organizations that operate according to written operating agreements with the CSU system's Board of Trustees. Each auxiliary organization has a separate governing board, and follows all legal rules and policies established by the CSU system and the campus [link: [CSU Auxiliary website](#)]. Auxiliaries are created to support functions that may be restricted or not supported by state funding and can also provide an additional source of revenue to enhance the student experience. The University harnesses these additional resources to reduce the burden of overall expenses. Through the strategic plan, the University aligns these additional resources with its educational mission. CSU Bakersfield's auxiliary activities include the following:

- Student self-governance (Associated Students, Inc.)
- The Student Union and Student Recreation Center
- Externally-supported research and sponsored programs, including workshops, institutes or conferences (Auxiliary for Sponsored Programs)
- Philanthropic activities, including acceptance of donor gifts (CSU Bakersfield Foundation)

Associated Students, Inc. (ASI), established in 1976 as a student self-governance organization, represents the student body's interests and addresses issues impacting the student experience on campus. This auxiliary collects student fees to support a variety of clubs and organizations, activities, services, athletics, and the Children's Center on campus. ASI collected \$3.6 million in fiscal year 2016-17 and \$3.3 million in 2015-16 to support these activities [link: [ASI Audited Statement website](#)].

The Student Union, established in 1994, and Student Recreation Center, established in 2009, share a mission of enhancing the quality of student life on campus through exposure to various student-centered programming and events. The Student Union provides a space in which students can meet, organize, attend events, study, and engage socially [link: [Student Union website](#)]. The Student Recreation Center (SCR) provides an environment in which students can develop their physical and mental well-being through fitness, sports, and wellness programming. The SRC provides a variety of programming and services, including outdoor adventure trips, group exercise classes, intramural sports, rock climbing, personal training, and special events. Combined, these two organizations generated revenues of \$4.8 million in fiscal year 2016-17 and \$4.2 million in fiscal year 2015-16, including student fees and other revenues generated from the rental of facilities, membership fees, etc. [link: [Student Union Audited Statements](#)].

The Auxiliary for Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA) was established in 2009 to support the university in obtaining grants and contracts for faculty and staff research and educational projects. Awards may be generated from federal, state, or local resources. These awards assist

in educational, research and service related-activities that enhance the learning opportunities of students [link: [GRASP website](#)]. In fiscal year 2016-17, SPA administered 60 new and continuing awards totaling approximately \$8 million, which represents a \$1 million increase over 2015-2016 [link: [GRASP Audited Financials](#)].

The CSU Bakersfield Foundation was established in 1969 as a philanthropic organization to increase private support, i.e. donations and gifts, to the University in the areas of student scholarships, campus programming, and improvement and enhancement of campus facilities [link: [CSU Bakersfield Foundation website](#)]. From fiscal year 2015-16 to fiscal year 2016-17, contributions decreased from \$5.8 million to \$3.8 million. Nevertheless, the university's endowment held by the Foundation increased to approximately \$33 million, compared to \$28 million in fiscal year 2015-2016 [link: [CSU Bakersfield Foundation Audit Statements](#)].

## **7.8 RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROGRAM REVIEW AND EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7)**

As described in Essay 6, the faculty-driven Academic Program Review process requires that academic programs submit a self-study to the University Program Review Committee (UPRC). Each academic program is evaluated every seven years [link: [Program Review Schedule](#)]. The department's or program's self-study reflects upon measures of student involvement in scholarship and/or creative activities as well as evidence of alumni and employer satisfaction. Data on student retention and graduation rates, time to degree, and units at graduation is provided and analyzed in terms of program effectiveness [link: [Academic Program Review Process](#)].

In addition to the content described in detail in Essays 3 and 6, the program review process at CSU Bakersfield includes a considerable resource allocation component, which starts with the data provided through the program profile. The program profile is a data summary of the degree-granting program's academic and student success metric, including financial information [[Program Profile Summary Data xls. 3:7.16](#)]. In the referenced file, the first tab indicates the instructional cost of each academic program disaggregated by faculty type. This information is used to compute the overall cost of each degree. The UPRC reviews this data with specific attention to comparing the current and historical costs of delivering the program as well as the university's average program costs. Importantly, this data is also made available to the external reviewer, who provides an outside perspective on department expenses.

After external review, the UPRC composes a letter that outlines the UPRC's observations and recommendations. Recommendations address possible areas of improvement as well as support for or reservations about program requests for new positions and other resources. As described in Essay 6, the Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan (MOUAP) is the final step in the process [[MOUAP Tracking Grid doc. 4.4:66](#)]. The MOUAP is a central document where the alignment of resources with the educational goals of the department and the university can be identified [[MOUAP Template doc. 4.4:67](#)]. For example, in 2015, the Art Department completed the MOUAP process, which demonstrates its negotiated and transactional nature, as the department's strengths and weaknesses are noted [[Art Department 2015 MOUAP doc. 4.4:68](#)]. Importantly, the Art Department also stipulates areas in which the

university needs to provide better financial and facilities support. Lastly, the document indicates projected hires for the department.

## **7.9 CONCLUSIONS**

This essay has conveyed the institution's approach to financial viability, and its dependence upon the continued support of the state of California and the CSU Chancellor's Office. The process and systems used to determine the university's resources, including the role of the state and the Office of the Chancellor, are described in detail. Moreover, this essay elaborates upon the systems used to align those resources with the strategic direction of the university, as well as its educational effectiveness.

## ESSAY 8 REFLECTIONS AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Throughout this institutional report, it is shown that over the last 48 years, CSU Bakersfield has grown into a respected and valued regional comprehensive university with an important role in Kern County, California. The institution has continually strived to provide and increase access to a high-quality education to students within the service area. The preceding pages provide both narratives and evidence of efforts to achieve these goals since the last WSCUC review. The sections below summarize each essay.

Essay 1 describes CSU Bakersfield, the context in which the university was created, and populations the it serves. This essay also reviews previous WSCUC actions and recommendations the University has endeavored to address.

Essay 2 describes the university's compliance with WSCUC Standards. Using the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators, it is confirmed that each academic program has implemented an internal assessment system to identify whether students are achieving the faculty's learning objectives. Moreover, the essay explains how program review buttresses the internal assessment systems.

Essay 3 presents the meaning of both undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded at CSU Bakersfield. Equally, the essay describes the CSU system-wide and campus initiatives and tactics employed to increase retention and graduation rates.

Essay 4 describes how the students, faculty and staff collaborate to set academic and co-curricular goals, as well as the processes and systems used to evaluate student achievement of those goals. The evidence presented indicates that, in general, both undergraduate and graduate students at CSU Bakersfield meet faculty-established standards for student learning.

Essay 5 presents the University's approach to student success, and elaborates upon the tactics and measures implemented to support student progress to graduation. The essay also addresses how the CSU Graduation Initiative 2025 Goals are being met by the campus.

Essay 6 examines CSU Bakersfield's systems of quality assurance and evaluation, including periodic program review. Further detail is provided about the integration of the program review process with overall resource allocation and educational effectiveness.

Essay 7 describes the current financial position of CSU Bakersfield, as well as the institution's ability to harness shared governance to chart a sustainable course for future success.

Today, CSU Bakersfield is a highly respected institution of 9,300 undergrads and 1,200 graduate students, with most of those students being women and/or people of color. CSU Bakersfield offers over 50 bachelor's and master's degree programs spread over four schools: Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education. The University also has unique value to the service region, among the poorest counties in California, with a poverty rate of 22.4 percent in

2016 [[link: Quick Facts Kern County](#)]. CSU Bakersfield is known as a commuter school and transfer institution, which matches the low-income status of many of its students. Recently, the institution has been recognized for its incredible economic value [[link: CSUB Economic Value of Degree](#)] its inclusiveness [[link: Top University of Student Inclusion](#)], and for its graduate program excellence [[link: Washington Monthly Rankings](#)]. It also ranks in 38<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. among Best Universities for Hispanic Students [[link: Best Universities for Hispanic Students](#)]. Kern is also one of the most oil-rich counties in California, and the University's award-winning petroleum geology program readies students for the energy industry. As an educational community that spans decades, CSU Bakersfield has demonstrated excellence.

In 2020, CSU Bakersfield will honor the people, programs and students it has served for 50 years. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is an opportunity for the university to reflect upon its accomplishments, while collectively planning its future. The University has warmly welcomed Dr. Lynette Zelezny, who in July 2018 became the fifth permanent president of CSU Bakersfield and the first female President. Zelezny succeeds Dr. Horace Mitchell who retired after fourteen years in office. Zelezny has served as provost and vice president of academic affairs at CSU Fresno since 2014, and brings to CSU Bakersfield her transformational leadership as a champion for student success and diversity. As Dr. Zelezny has stated, the campus will embark on a new collaborative strategic plan that will refine its institutional direction. In sum, the institution appreciates the opportunity to demonstrate both strengths and challenges for the future. Go Runners!

## ACRONYMS

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AARC	Academic Advising and Resource Center
AA-T	Associates in Arts degree for Transfer
ACT	American College Test
ADTs	Associates Degree for Transfers
AGR	Absolute Graduation Rate
AH	Arts and Humanities
AI-G	American Institutions-Government
AI-H	American Institutions-History
AIMS	Achieving Integration & Mastering Skills
ALO	Accreditation Liaison Officer
AMS	Assessment Management System
AMP	Academic Master Plan
API	Academic Performance Index
APR	Academic Progress Rate
ASI	Associated Students, Inc.
ASR	Annual Security Reports
AS-T	Associates in Science degree for Transfer
ATOD	Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention
AVPAP	Associate Vice President for Academic Programs
BMI	Body Mass Index
BPA	Business and Public Administration
BPC	Budget and Planning Committee
BSBA	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
CAMP	College Assistance Migrant Program
CAP-K	Community Action Partnership of Kern
CC	Counseling Center
CDIP	Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program
CERC	California Energy Research Center
CECE	Center for Career education and Community Engagement
CFR	Criteria for Review
CLA	Collegiate Learning Assessment
CMMS	Computerized Maintenance Management System
CPSY	Counseling Psychology
CSET	California Subject Exams for Teachers
CSU	California State University
DCLC	Department Chair Leadership Council
DLC	Distributed Learning Committee
DPQ	Degree Qualification Profile
EAP	Early Assessment Program
EOP	Educational Opportunity Program

ERWC	Expository Reading and Writing Course
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
FACs	Faculty Assessment Coordinators
FTE	Full time equivalent
GE	General Education
GECCo	General Education Curriculum Committee
GE FAC	General Education Faculty Assessment Coordinator
GE LCFs	General Education Community Facilitators
GE PLOs	General Education Program Learning Outcomes
GI 2025	Graduation Initiative 2025
GITF	Graduation Initiative Task Force
GPA	Grade point average
GRASP	Grants, Research, and Sponsored Programs
GRD	Graduation Rate Dashboard
GSC	Graduate Student Center
GSR	Graduation Success Rate
GSC	Graduate Student Center
GSL	Graduate Student Leadership
GWAR	Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement
HACU	Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
HIS	Hispanic Serving Institution
HPV	Human papilloma virus
HSUP	High School University Promise
IEEI	Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
IRPA	Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment
ISP	International Students and Programs
ITC	Information Technology Committee
ITCA	Information Technology Council
ITS	Information Technology Services
ITDR	Information Technology Disaster Recovery
JYDR	Junior-Year Diversity and Reflection
KHSD	Kern High School District
KSOS	Kern Superintendent of Schools
LCs	Learning Communities
LCFs	Learning Community Facilitators
MOUAP	Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan
MPA	Masters of Public Administration
MWL Plus	MyWritingLab Plus
NASPAA	Network of Schools of Public policy, Affairs, and Administration
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NSME	School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering
NSSE	National Survey of Student Engagement
PCI	Payment Card Industry

PLOs	Program Learning Outcomes
Q2S	Quarter to semester
RUWS	Review under WSCUC Standards
SLOs	Student Learning Outcomes
SAM	Student Achievement Measure
SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress
SFCI	Student/Faculty Collaborative Initiatives
SFR	Student-faculty ratio
SHS	Student Health Center
SI	Supplemental Instruction
SPA	Sponsored Programs Administration
SRC	Student Recreation Center
SSC	Student Success Counselor
SSD	Services for Students with Disabilities
SSE	School of Education and Social Sciences
STEM	Science Technology, Math and Engineering
ULOs	University Learning Outcomes
ULOGP	University Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs
UPD	University Police Department
UPRC	University Program Review Committee
URM	Underrepresented Minority
URR	Unit Redemption Rate
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USP-BAC	University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee
VPSA	Vice President for Student Affairs
WAC	Western Athletic Conference
WRC	Writing Resource Center
WSCUC Commission	Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University