

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

AS-2821-07/EX
November 8-9, 2007

Response To *Access To Excellence* Draft

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) express serious concerns about the *Access to Excellence* draft, as it is not yet a visionary document and does not yet adequately state clear goals for academic excellence or strategies for how excellence is to be achieved; and be it further

RESOLVED: That in order to become a document that will guide the CSU over the next decade, the ASCSU strongly recommend that the next draft of *Access to Excellence*:

- a. define academic excellence far more broadly than workforce training and provide a clear plan of how to achieve excellence;
- b. provide a roadmap for securing necessary funding for academic excellence;
- c. serve as an effective vehicle for advocacy of the CSU that builds upon the public's existing esteem for higher education;
- d. provide a realistic plan for growth; and
- e. draw on faculty disciplinary expertise and involvement in the discernment of multiple appropriate performance quality indicators; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU appreciate recognition of the following points and view them as essential to include in subsequent drafts of the strategic plan:

- a. the value and importance of individuality among the universities comprising the CSU to meet the needs of California; and
- b. the increased need for college education including graduate and professional training to ensure the quality of civic and economic life in California; and
- c. the importance of investing in the faculty and staff, a goal that was not accomplished under *Cornerstones*; and
- d. the need for a plan to meet both the state Master Plan goals and for financing higher education; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU urge that these concerns and other issues elaborated in the responses from CSU East Bay, Fullerton, San Diego, and San José campus senates as well as Teacher Education and K-12 Relations Committee to the *Access to Excellence* draft be carefully reviewed and reflected into the next draft; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU forward copies of this resolution to the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and the *Access to Excellence* Steering Committee.

RATIONALE: As written it is not clear who the intended audience is for the Access to Excellence document. The audience should be our external constituencies and the electorate, who can be mobilized to create the climate for increased funding, and the internal constituency, who can be motivated to continue their quest for academic excellence.

To that end this should be a visionary document with clear goals for excellence and guidelines for how to achieve it. As such it could vastly improve morale in the CSU and provide a rallying point to create a movement of our constituencies and the electorate to help us out of the current funding crisis. This state needs a strong voice for higher education which, rather than accept the current political climate as a given, provides leadership to change that climate into one that will support adequate funding for quality education. This document should be the basis for that leadership.

Rather than address the “accountability movement” critics, Access to Excellence should trumpet the many strengths and the many accomplishments of the CSU. It should build upon the very positive views that the American public has about higher education. The New York Times recently surveyed alumni five years after they left their institutions: 93% described their undergraduate experiences good or excellent (Jacques Steinberg: “Don’t Worry. Be Students.” The New York Times Magazine. September 30, 2007 p73ff. Also at nytimes.com/magazine). Additionally, the Public Policy Institute of California (http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/survey/S_1007MBS.pdf) reported in October that 92% of respondents thought “that getting a college education was money and time well spent,” and that 82% would recommend California public colleges and universities to a friend or family member.

Those are important results. Higher education may be the most highly regarded institution in America today and rather than being defensive this document should be reaching the public with our successes. We must not rest on our laurels, but we do have laurels and future drafts should emphasize these.

This draft focuses on access to the detriment of excellence. It lacks a blueprint for academic excellence and does not provide a strategy to achieve it. It does not provide insight into how increased funding will be obtained. It does not call for a plan for growth or acknowledge the need for new campuses. It focuses too much on global competition to justify internationalization without recognizing the importance of developing an educated global citizen. It appears to envision obtaining academic quality through a centralized management approach based on “clearly defined and readily measurable indicators of performance,” ignoring the reality that academic excellence comes through the work of students, individual faculty, and local campus administrations

It does recognize the uniqueness of individual campuses, the need to strengthen the faculty, the importance of service and research as well as teaching, and the need for funding, and these must not be lost in future drafts.

However, this is a system document and the role for the centralized CSU management and Board of Trustees in providing for excellence is first and foremost to assure adequate funding. Current funding is not adequate to

maintain excellence, much less strengthen it. This document should lay out the strategy for providing adequate funding. Lacking that, this document is primarily a management—not a leadership—document. What the CSU and higher education in California needs is that leadership.

Time prevents a more detailed response. We would encourage the drafting committee to pay close attention to the submissions from the East Bay, Fullerton, and San Diego campuses, which have received a positive response from many senators.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY – November 8, 2007