

California State University Channel Islands

Report on Campus-wide Access to Excellence Conversations and Weblog

January 19 – March 15, 2007

Background

President Richard R. Rush opened the campus-wide Access to Excellence meeting on Friday, January 19, by stating that he was gratified by the large number of university and community members that came to participate in what he described as one of the most important ventures undertaken by the CSU Board of Trustees in recent years, and an opportunity for all 23 campuses to participate in shaping the future of The California State University. Stating that this initiative was a high priority for both the Board and the campus, he encouraged everyone present to participate fully in the process.

Over 120 persons attended the meeting, which began at 8:30 in the morning and concluded just before noon. The participants represented every constituency associated with the university, and included faculty, students, staff, administrators, alumni, community members, the Chancellor's Office, and two members of the CSU Board of Trustees.

Senate Chair Terry Ballman and Provost Ted Lucas co-chaired the planning committee for the event, and shared the podium during the course of the day. After a review of the purpose of the Access to Excellence initiative, the discussants were self-selected to participate in six Domain discussion groups, each chaired by a volunteer. Each group also included at least one member of the planning committee. A plenary session followed at which spokespersons for each Domain discussion group summarized the discussions that had taken place and the recommendations made.

Following the meeting, the university posted a weblog on its web site so that anyone could add to the discussion and make recommendations to the planning committee. The weblog was taken down on March 15.

The remainder of this report is a summary of the discussions held in each of the Domain groups followed by the comments and recommendations made on the university's weblog.

Domain 1: Assuring Access

Group One began by reporting on what the participants felt that CSUCI was doing well in its effort to reach out to the community, especially the elementary and high schools, to encourage students to attend college and to ensure their success once they enroll. Among the effective programs and activities in which Channel Islands is engaged include the Early Assessment Program (EAP), participation in the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), migrant education, the University Preparation School (UPS), CSUCI's Pathway to College, partnerships with local community colleges, service learning, and a strong advising staff.

The group also noted the effective access efforts of the CSU system as a whole, citing especially the widely-distributed "How to Get to College" poster and web site.

The group listed a number of challenges for the campus and the system, both in terms of outreach and of student success. Concern was expressed that there is too much testing in P-12 schools, along with the frequent practice of “teaching to the test.” Faculty also reported that freshmen are often poorly prepared for college-level work. An additional challenge facing the campuses is the matter of resources to engage in the kind of outreach and student success efforts that would make a difference.

The group listed a number of recommendations that it felt would improve access and student success:

- Communicate more effectively with P-12 schools regarding our resources available to them.
- Help P-12 schools become familiar with our student profile.
- Provide our faculty with means to access our students’ academic information.
- Encourage PIQE to increase the number of participating schools in each county.
- Find additional ways to motivate high school and community college students to see the value of a CSU degree.
- Bring K-8 students to campus for enjoyable events.
- Link majors, service learning, civic engagement and university outreach on our campus so that we do not duplicate efforts.
- Reconcile the apparent conflict between facilitation of graduation efforts and the needs of lifelong learners.
- Offer more summer and regular session enrichment/preparation programs in Math and English.
- Combine outreach to students with parent education.
- Form a partnership in Ventura County with the high schools and community colleges for the purpose of preparing students for the CSU.
- Encourage each CSU campus to employ a staff liaison with local community colleges, high schools, and elementary schools.
- Explore ways to better use technology to communicate with potential CSU students.
- Create a campus web site in Spanish.
- Encourage the CSU to lead a statewide effort to get computers in schools and in the hands of students.
- Establish a website, similar to the CSU “How to Get to College” poster, for fifth grade students and teachers, which would include “things to do to get to college.”

Weblog comments pertaining to Domain 1 were as follows:

- Given the increased demand combined with limited resources, a clear strength of our campus and the CSU as a whole is the ability to offer high quality educational programs through Extended Education.
- I have some questions about the phrase “eliminating the achievement gap.” What does this really mean? If we take this literally, it seems that we’re saying we want to bring what have typically been underachieving groups in particular subjects up to what may amount to a mediocre standard, while not pushing students who already excel in that area to excel further. Shouldn’t the goal be to maximize the learning outcome of all students?

Domain 2: Connecting to Pre-K-12 Schools and Community Colleges

Group Two addressed many of the same issues as Group One, but had different observations and developed additional recommendations. The group’s list of the strengths of the CSU and the campus included the following: CSU is a public university committed to access for students of California—it is

a cost effective means for those seeking higher education, and it is known for its quality and the diversity and range of program offerings; the many CSU campuses are diverse in their missions and each have a high level of autonomy in setting their own directions; with the emerging CSUCI Nursing program, CSUCI has additional opportunities for links to community colleges; CSUCI faculty have strong connections to the region and to the community.

Among the observations and recommendation that the Domain 2 group made were:

- Partnerships between CSUCI and community colleges should be brought to the student level. Students need to feel connected to the goals we establish for easing their transition from community college to the University.
- CSUCI could be more aggressive in cultivating local transfers.
- The CSU at the system should provide resources and sustained efforts to support P-12 and community college partnerships at the campus level.
- The Lower Division Transfer Pattern project (LDTP) should be continued and sustained.
- A solution that would not be well received is the Florida model, where common lower division requirements were imposed on the state campuses as a whole.
- There should be a mechanism to bring the community colleges and the CSUs together to discuss common issues. The transfer process is too complex; students don't understand its intricacies. There needs to be a systematic approach, an infrastructure, through which questions and issues between the two segments get resolved. Funding is the key. Partnerships are not sustainable without it.
- The campuses should seek outside grant funding to help systematize individual campus efforts, and perhaps collaborate on grant proposals.
- Are students aware of the mission? Perhaps we ought to survey students to assess their level of awareness of it. The CSU mission is essential.
- Consult external stakeholders in the development of all new majors.
- The course articulation process needs to be improved. It is more than numbering courses. It reflects values and it requires discussion.
- There are tremendous changes happening in high schools, and perhaps what we ought to be doing is mapping backwards to the high school students so they have a better idea of what's expected later in the education sequence. This would be especially important in cultivating relations with 11th and 12th graders.
- Faculty need to be involved in pathway articulations. Oxnard College's model tech prep program has worked because there was faculty involvement.
- The CSU should look into ways to help high schools provide adequate math and science education, as too often teachers themselves must foot the bill for lab materials in science classes.

Several questions emerged from the group's discussion. Among them were:

- How should accountability be defined?
- Are we moving toward a No Child Left Behind system for higher education, where colleges and universities would have targeted proficiencies and skills they would be expected to teach?
- What do institutions of education want to be held accountable to and for?
- How do we know whether or not we have met the needs of our constituents?
- How do we improve teacher motivation?

The group's presentation ended with the following observations:

We are moving in the right directions. There are regional connections among our institutions, but they are not systematized and as widespread as needed. One of the many issues impacting this is time. Do we have reasonable expectations of our faculty and administrators? CSUCI doesn't have enough faculty to take on collaborative projects. There is much that competes for their time, including teaching itself. Let's be careful that what we establish is sustainable. Collaborative ventures require time and money.

There were no weblog comments pertaining to Domain 2.

Domain 3: Fulfilling Commitments to Multiple Stakeholders, Internal and External

Group Three consisted of an equal mix of community members, staff, and faculty. The conversation was robust and all participated. Discussion centered on service learning, civic engagement, and student responsibility to the greater world. A secondary discussion centered on Channel Islands' connections to the non-profit sector via service learning.

The group reported on what it felt were the strengths of CSU Channel Islands relative to fulfilling our commitments to our stakeholders. They were as follows:

The university is known in the community because of its community partnerships and outreach efforts. Examples are: the Business and Technology Partnership, a strong relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Camarillo, the upcoming Rubicon Theatre International Film Festival, the presence of Studio Channel Islands on campus, our work with social services agencies (hospitals and nursing programs), the development of majors with community input, internships in the community, and the work of the Small Business Institute.

Other strengths that the community perceives are: our enrollment is growing, our fundraising is successful, our staff, faculty and President Rush are well known in the community, members of the faculty have received state and international awards, President Rush is on national boards (HACU and Campus Compact, for example), the quality of instruction is high, the university's accreditation progress has been excellent, the campus will become an Hispanic Serving Institution on the not-too-distant future, community members are invited to numerous events on campus and are involved on advisory boards at all levels, and the university has a strong Education and Credential program, producing excellent K-12 teachers for the region.

The group recommended that the campus expand connections to Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Moorpark.

The Service Learning Office in the Chancellor's Office and the CSU Study Abroad Program were cited as strengths of the CSU system in the context of this Domain.

An extended report regarding Service Learning followed and included the following recommendations:

- Help students transcend self-interest by viewing education as something other than a commodity item.
- Focus on Service Learning by getting the fourth Mission-based Center up and running.

- Make Service Learning a distinguishing characteristic of CSUCI.
- Endorse and articulate the value of citizenship and civic engagement.
- Broaden student participation in Service Learning.
- Publicize to non-profits availability of our students for internships.
- Focus on the communities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru because they are fast growing.
- Ramp up the Alumni and Friends program in Advancement.
- Develop official linkages to Ventura County Government via the Dean's Leadership Council.
- Strengthen the Speakers Bureau.

The overall consensus of the group was that communication from the campus to the outside community needs to be strengthened. Our constituencies want CSUCI to listen, react, communicate and report back. The group recommends that the campus give presentations to the community, especially by way of the local newspaper and cable television.

Regarding how technology could help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area, the group encouraged the solicitation of community input into our web design, because some members of the group felt that information was hard to find. The group also recommended that the campus incorporate "Make the University Public" theme in the web design, and put Speakers Bureau information on the web site.

Another discussion centered on content that could be made available to the public, such as streaming web, DVDs, CDs, audio and video clips of faculty on web downloads, and making teleconferences (national, international) available. It was also suggested that the campus create a Virtual Town Hall as a hub of civic engagement, that the campus use phone surveys and online surveys to gather community input, use text messaging, RSS feeds, podcasts, and popular sites such as You Tube.

Finally, the group recommended that the campus use available technology to report back to community members on the outcome of their time spent at the Access to Excellence meeting.

Weblog comments pertaining to Domain 3 were as follows:

- I think CSUCI would benefit from a robust presence in Santa Paula and Fillmore. There are many potential students in those rapidly growing areas.
- From its inception, CSUCI has identified the senior community of this area as stakeholders. By hosting the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute on campus, OLLI-CSUCI provides high-quality, non-graded, non-credit courses to area seniors. Ten to 14 eight-week courses are available to seniors over 50 in each of three sessions during the academic year. Most courses are offered weekdays on campus, but OLLI also offers evening and Saturday classes in Thousand Oaks, Ventura, Oxnard, and Ojai, serving the senior community throughout the county. Since the inaugural session in fall, 2004, OLLI membership has grown to 358 senior stakeholders in the region.
- As Ventura County municipalities are stakeholders, the new City of Thousand Oaks service learning agreement offers great potential toward fulfilling commitments to multiple stakeholders. One project is in place where students will help both the city and its merchants.
- A strength of our campus and the CSU is Extended Education's ability to build bridges to the external community. What should be done is to increase the way that this function of Extended Education is used strategically by the CSU and individual campuses in the planning process and on an on-going basis.

Domain 4: Ensuring Success in Student Learning

Group Four reported that it developed a list of the strengths of CSU Channel Islands in ensuring student success. They were as follows:

- CSUCI has an excellent Advising program
- The Advising Office works with students from start to finish (continuous monitoring of students until graduation).
- Advisors play a strong role in freshman orientation and transfer orientations.
- The Advising center located in the middle of campus – meeting our mission statement by placing students at the center.
- STAR appointment: sending students a postcard at the beginning of the semester to welcome and invite them to the advising center.
- The Advising Office takes a proactive approach.
- There is a mandatory appointment with Advising required two years prior to graduation.
- Faculty also play a strong role in advising – students have two resources to contact.
- Advising meets with faculty once a year to review requirements and make any changes necessary.
- Advising does all forms on campus to maintain consistency.
- Co-curricular portfolios are often incorporated into courses to couple curricular with co-curricular.
- The University Math and Writing Center is open until 6:00 p.m.

The group submitted the following list of actions it felt that the campus should take in order to ensure student success:

- Create internal motivation for students to get connected with their advisors and other resources on campus.
- Involve our new library with the classroom and students.
- Help students deal with the transition from high school to college with courses such as University 100.
- Expand our “first year program” for freshman students.
- Develop stronger relationship with Academic and Student Affairs.
- Expand the hours of the different areas of campus; also expand the math and writing centers to have more disciplines included.

The group also developed recommendations for the CSU system as a whole, as follows:

- Institute a mandatory course for freshman/transfers that helps students understand what college level courses require.
- Examine the changing population in surrounding areas. Ensure that each campus is serving its region to the best of its ability.
- Effectively outreach to freshmen, transfers, and nontraditional students.
- Require a mandatory meeting for first-year students with their advisors.
- Find ways to better equip students to become life-long learners
- Encourage campuses to be involved in service learning and civic engagement to better ensure the success of students outside the classroom.

- Encourage campuses to reach out to the community as a learning environment – engage community members in the success of students.
- Make resources available that will provide more access to digital technology for students, eliminating the “digital divide.”
- Encourage campuses to incorporate service learning with academic programs.

Group Four addressed the matter of how technology could facilitate student success. At the campus level, the group recommended that students be given the ability to make payments to the university online. It also recommended that an online calendar be developed to better inform students of on-campus activities, including both curricular and co-curricular activities; that an online community chat room be created; that our website be expanded to include more information for students; and that prerequisites for courses be incorporated into PeopleSoft.

Three recommendations emerged for the system as a whole: provide online advising, including faculty; enable PeopleSoft to produce advising reports; and develop a system for tracking CSU alumni.

There was one weblog comment pertaining to Domain 4.

- An important part of student success is high school readiness for college work. The Early Assessment Program at CI and other CSUs is an important initiative. Added to it should be efforts to see that more high schools students follow the course track that permits eligibility for admission to CSU at graduation. In Ventura County more high school seniors can become CSU eligible.

Domain 5: Faculty/Staff Excellence to Provide Student Success

Group Five presented the draft of a possible definition of student success, as follows: Develop academic, social, inter- and intrapersonal skills of current students in order to become lifelong learners and to be effective in the workplace and in their personal lives.

The quality of our faculty is high, the group believed, and this is characterized as follows:

- Current in field /discipline
- “Real world relevance”
- Interdisciplinary curiosity, involvement, interest and/or understanding that extends across academic disciplines and university domains with a view toward the world
- Active research program or creative activity that involves students
- Dedication to student success
- Motivation, inspiration, mentoring
- Engaging, effective pedagogues
- Community activity/service learning
- Diverse experience
- Role Models – creating an environment conducive to learning

The group reported that CSUCI’s Retention, Tenure and Promotion process (RTP) is rigorous and thus ensures quality teaching and scholarship. Demonstration of faculty quality can be found in positive student learning outcomes as evidenced by student evaluations and other measures.

The strengths of CSU Channel Islands in the context of this Domain, the group believed, are as follows:

- High quality faculty at this time
- Significant faculty accomplishments
- Library publicizes faculty scholarship and creative activities.
- The campus is responsive to mission-based procedures and is flexible.
- Committed faculty
- On-campus housing for CSUCI faculty

The staff members at Channel Islands are important to student success because of the following characteristics::

- Intellectual curiosity
- Competent and dedicated
- Patient
- Student success oriented
- Service oriented
- Multi-taskers
- Flexible
- Committed
- Family- and work life-friendly institution
- Value collegiality

The strengths of CSU Channel Islands in supporting its staff are:

- High quality
- Peer-like, collegial rapport with others
- Family issues are taken into consideration
- On-campus housing for CSUCI staff
- Managers who encourage participation in fee waiver program and support class attendance during work hours

In terms of recruiting the kind of staff and faculty that support and ensure student success, the group listed three areas it felt were especially strong on our campus:

- An innovative, effective interdisciplinary faculty recruiting process
- On-campus housing for faculty, staff, and administrators
- A strong library

Recommendations to both the campus and the system regarding ways to strengthen the faculty ensued:

- Continue to support and increase faculty development efforts.
- Address faculty workload issue in order to make time for scholarship and creative activities.
- Identify funding for faculty development.
- Find funding for science and math startup packages.
- Create additional laboratory space for the sciences, which will increase grant eligibility.
- Approach the legislative regarding increasing the statewide \$12.5 million fund for research.

- Develop a structure in Academic Affairs that supports interdisciplinary faculty and their work.
- Hold research events on campus to attract support and attention.
- Find additional funding for field trips.
- Increase publicity about innovative programs and events in trade journals, newspapers, *Chronicle for Higher Education*, etc.
- Review space allocation formulas for research activities on campus at the system level.
- Increase funding for the CSU Forgivable Loan program.
- Institute the graduate WTU differential.
- Encourage legislative changes to support doctoral programs.

The group's recommendations regarding strengthening the staff included:

- Raise CSUCI salary ranges to market level where they are below.
- Reward staff with raises.
- Recognize the shortcomings of the CBA.
- Recognize good work through means other than money.
- Continue to provide opportunities for advancement.
- Ensure that all staff levels are appropriate.
- Acknowledge and recognize outstanding staff work.
- Identify how individual roles contribute to the greater good; for example, how does the work of the accounting office contribute to student success?
- Streamline bureaucratic processes to enable student service positions to focus on student service.

There are a number of challenges facing new faculty that the Group Five felt were important to mention. Among them were the cost of living in Ventura County, the cost of child care, the absence of a child care facility on campus, the small size of the university (with big needs), the limited number of scholarships for students, and a limited outreach program.

Group Five made a number of recommendations that it felt would improve student life on campus:

- Institute a sports program on campus.
- Have better event coverage.
- Make available retail offerings.
- Provide more space for offices, classrooms and labs.
- Offer more online courses.
- Offer a broader and more comprehensive range of majors.

In terms of how technology could support the goals of Domain 5, the group observed that:

- Telecommuting could be encouraged.
- Strictly on-line coursework doesn't provide full spectrum of college experience. Students prefer hybrid courses.
- Technology could support research projects.
- The IT Strategy Council could address issues in this Domain.
- A wireless campus would be an ideal situation.
- We need to make more books available in electronic format.
- We should have more accessible labs.

There were no weblogs comments pertaining to Domain 5.

Domain 6: Now and in the Future: Campus/System Identity

Group Six felt that the CSUCI Mission Statement (the four pillars) is one of our great strengths. The group suggested that the system-wide Mission Statement be revised to be more focused, and therefore more of a useful guide to the system. In general the group saw many of the struggles now and into the future to be related to the California State Master Plan for Higher Education. The group strongly encouraged a revision of the Master Plan (in collaboration with the UCs and the Community Colleges). Many of the issues related to academic planning, funding, etc., are a direct consequence of the CSU's position in the now 47-year-old educational model for the state. Meeting both the requirements of access and excellence are problematic under the current CSU model. The group suggested leveraging the vast CSU student base to motivate this change.

Following this introduction, Group six listed what it believed to be the strengths of both the campus and the system:

Core Strengths - CSUCI

Small school
Priorities – 4 Pillars
Personnel Hiring
Location
Flexibility
Innovation, creativity
Approachability
Quality of students
Minimal state support
Affordability
Mutual respect among disciplines
Fewer dept. silos
Mission statement practiced thru campus activities
Student engagement
Students identify with CI

Core Strengths - CSU

Largest system
Value teacher prep
Access/affordability
Purchasing power*
Quality of faculty*
Shared governance
International programs
STEM focus*
Responsive to regional needs*
Political clout*
Location (state)
Moving Beyond “Union” - Avenues to create successful shared governance
* Areas for improvement (lots of potential)

The group then took up the matter of identifying those national and international priorities that should become part of the CSU's core identity. The following list is the result of that effort:

- Promote global awareness.
- Address the “silent crisis”—the absence of a skilled workforce in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).
- Affirm and assure the vitality of the values of shared governance in an environment of student participation and collective bargaining.
- Move beyond “union.”
- Explore other avenues to create successful shared governance.
- Identify and revise as necessary those policies at every level that hinder strong definition and articulation of core strengths and essential identity.
- Revise the Master Plan for Higher Education.
- Increase graduate education opportunities.
- Revise the campus funding formula. Enrollment-based funding doesn’t always work.
- Create a political lobby to influence funding.
- Educate the legislature about CSU.
- Examine the governance of the CSU vis-à-vis legislature in order to allow us to do what we do well as teacher-scholars.
- Increase autonomy of each campus to interpret the Mission of CSU.
- Build on strength of diversity of students.
- Engage key state and national policy-makers in dialogue about CSU's future.
- Invite input to the definition and articulation of essential identity.
- Encourage policy-makers to embrace CSU's vision for itself.
- Successfully market the CSU vision and achievements to policymakers to ensure that funds needed for success will be available on a predictable basis.
- Develop a consensus (with policy makers and others) about the roles and responsibilities of the CSU.
- Address the issue of affordability within the context of access, excellence, individual campus mission, and state and individual/family responsibility.
- Assure that demand and capacity are in appropriate balance for every campus, and every region of the state.
- Think strategically about appropriate growth trajectory in the context of current and future demographic realities.
- Assure that smaller campuses with important regional missions thrive.
- Protect the distinctive missions of individual campuses, and place those distinctive missions within the CSU essential identity.
- Promote excellence in the classroom.
- Provide resources where needed.
- Revisit the faculty workload issue.
- Regularly revisit the CSU admissions policy.
- Consider allowing each campus to serve specific groups.
- Address demographic realities.
- Assure an appropriate balance among undergraduate, graduate, credential, and non-degree programs.

- Address the demands and opportunities arising from the arrival of the "digital age," including appropriate development of on-line and distance learning.
- Emphasize the value of a CSU education.
- Provide access to appropriate groups.
- Improve business processes.

There were two weblog comments pertaining to Domain 6.

- The strength of the CSU is in providing an opportunity for a college education for all who are academically qualified. What we need to do better is to find efficient ways to make access real and the impact of what we provide significant for both the individual student and society. If the trend in reduced funding for public higher education continues, the CSU must change its economic and pedagogical model. The CSU should experiment with alternative formats and the use of educational technology in a broad way. Furthermore, a special effort needs to be made in encouraging the success of first-generation college students as this is the core of what we do.
- Bill Gates states that within five years television will be a relic. Instead of a television, you will have an internet screen with choices not limited by your cable channel but as broad as the Internet. Viewers can use their remote control to watch video from a multitude of sites on the internet; users can download audio, read and print materials.

This means that the person on the couch with a remote control could tune into CSUCI Live, including campus activities, classes, lectures, and presentations. She might choose to watch a live video feed of CSUCI's baseball team (when did that happen?), or study about California history through a combination of videos, lectures, and written materials. From the couch she could watch a performance at CSUCI or order tickets and print them out to a live event. Student performers can have a presence.

MIT and other Universities post their class materials on-line for other people to review.

What becomes the identity of the state university when recorded video lectures (or audio downloads) are available on the internet from MIT, Stanford and Yale, or book publishers, as part of the daily entertainment menu of everyone including the couch potato? And, where the State University can have its own feed onto the internet?

Lectures become less important and interactive learning becomes more important. An internet presence for a State University campus provides the user in a home in Thousand Oaks with a live video feed of activities on campus to the couch; the class curriculum changes to incorporate other schools' lectures and downloads to listen to in the car. Class time is spent not on lecture, but on professors acting more like a coach with interactive and experiential learning.

CSUCI's competitive advantage arises from its ability to create a learning community, and professors as coaches. It also depends on presenting its own CSUCI Live performances of student art, music, sports, and theater. Its competitive advantage is also its rapport with the local community.