

**California State University, Fresno**  
**Access to Excellence: A Campus Conversation**  
March 6, 2007

**Introduction**

In support of the California State University's Board of Trustees action to develop a strategic plan to succeed *Cornerstones*, on March 6, 2007 the California State University, Fresno community engaged in a half-day campus-wide conversation. In his charge to the participants, President John D. Welty asked participants to think broadly about the system's future and the Fresno State Plan for Excellence III, which was completed in 2005-06.

**Methodology**

In preparing for our campus conversation, a general invitation was posted to our campus electronic bulletin board inviting all members of the campus community (faculty, staff and students) to participate. This invitation was reinforced at the Spring faculty/staff general assembly and the Administrative Roundtable.

Specific invitations were sent to: the Administrative Roundtable (all campus managers and department heads), all academic department chairs and coordinators, the campus Strategic Planning Committee, the members of the campus Academic Senate, the Staff Assembly and the Joint Labor Council. The student leadership body, the Associated Students, were invited to participate along with the President's Leadership Group, a body of students who meet with the President and Vice President for Student Affairs for discussion each month. Community members invited were the President's Advisory Board, the Alumni Advisory Board and the Foundation Board of Governors. Individual invitations were also sent to the chairs of all campus advisory boards.

In order to facilitate domain assignments, all participants were asked to respond to the Office of the President with their choice of domain designation. Each domain was assigned a facilitator and a recorder. All participants were asked review the issues set forth in their specific assigned domains prior to the general session on March 6<sup>th</sup> (see Attachment C). Participants were asked to consider the perspectives both of our campus and the CSU system as a whole. Specifically,

1. What are the strengths of our campus and the CSU system now?
2. What would we like either, or both, to be doing better in the future?
3. What changes need to occur at each level (campus and system) in order to do what each should be doing?
4. How could technology help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area?

Our session was broken into the following components:

- A pre-meeting with the facilitators and recorders,
- A general session with all participants,
- Break out groups for each domain,
- A final wrap-up session in which the facilitators of each domain briefly summarized their discussions for the entire group

Recorders were then advised to send their notes to one person who would compile the campus response.

On the day of our campus conversation, the President met with the facilitators and recorders immediately prior to the general session. They were told to let the discussion flow in order to capture all ideas and then to focus on those issues that are of importance to both Fresno State and the CSU system.

Immediately following this meeting, the approximately 100 participants, including CSU Trustee Dr. George Gowgani, CSU Student Trustee Jennifer Reimer, and Chancellor's Office Representative Dr. Joan Bissell, convened in a general session where President Welty welcomed and thanked all participants. His expectations were to have each domain discuss and briefly summarize their discussions in a final wrap-up session.

### **Executive Summary**

A review of the reports from the six domains revealed a similarity of campus and system strengths across the domains. California State University, Fresno is engaged with the community, our faculty provide expertise, research and problem solving to address community needs and dedicated faculty and staff work to provide our diverse student body a quality academic experience. The CSU system shares the campus's strengths in its outreach, diversity, excellent faculty, dedicated staff and breadth and quality of its programs.

Discussants from all domains reported that both the campus and the CSU System need to do a better job in promoting our successes, and improving both internal communication and our external marketing; including advocacy. Other areas needing more attention are recruiting and retaining excellent faculty and staff, continued improvement of student advising, and addressing faculty workloads.

Suggestions for campus and system changes to make these improvements occur were varied. Participants agreed that we need to increase collaboration with other institutions at all levels, and increase our grants, contracts and private support and carefully select our funding priorities. To recruit and retain the best and brightest faculty and staff, both the campus and the CSU need to provide competitive salaries, collaborative opportunities and also address housing issues. We need to eliminate duplication of services which erode time and productivity. Again, we need to promote our successes and improve our external marketing, and we need to develop infrastructures that will move us to the next level in research and development.

Technology will play a key role in helping us to succeed in these efforts. A strong technical infrastructure will assist the campus in day-to-day operations. As a system, we should work to forge partnerships to improve access to data systems within the CSU and links to other data sources. Distance learning, on-line classes and two-way video casting will allow us to more effectively communicate with students in rural areas. As technology receives greater emphasis in the curriculum, we must make a concerted effort to provide online accessibility for all students.

The following pages offer more comprehensive responses on the six Domains discussed at California State University, Fresno's 'Campus Conversation'.

### **Domain Reports**

*Domain 1: Assuring Access by encouraging improvement in P-12 students' academic preparation, addressing the needs of special learners, making the pathway from community colleges to CSU apparent, and ensuring that campus and system polices work in support of access.*

#### **1. What are the strengths of our campus and the CSU system now?**

##### **Fresno State**

- We are the major university in the Central San Joaquin Valley.
- We engage potential students by using Fresno State students as "College Ambassadors."
- The Kremen School of Education has several partnerships and contracts with area schools.
- There are campus events throughout the year that bring younger students to Fresno State (i.e. Peach Blossom Festival, Planetarium visits, musical performances, band festivals).
- Fresno State has achieved the Carnegie classification of an Engaged University.
- Participation in the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium.
- The ATI initiative endeavors to address needs of special learners in such areas as web technology, procurement and instructional materials.
- The Office for SSD is available to aid students with disabilities.
- There are some good efforts being made to facilitate articulation between the community colleges and the CSU.

##### **CSU**

- While prices continue to increase, the CSU remains relatively affordable.
- Super Sunday is a large and successful event that provides financial aid and college information to various segments of the community.
- Veterans Outreach is a new initiative to reach out to military veterans.

## **Fresno State & CSU**

- Policies are generally accessible. There is a broad dissemination of policies.

### **2. What would we like either, or both, to be doing better in the future?**

#### **Fresno State**

- Make outreach a campus-wide effort, as opposed to an effort that is undertaken mainly by the Kremen School of Education.
- Increase communication of strategies on campus.
- Improve external marketing of our efforts.
- Increase dialogue regarding policies intended to improve compliance.

#### **Fresno State and CSU**

- Increase outreach efforts in elementary and middle school.
- Implement distance learning for students with disabilities.
- Expand articulation efforts between the community colleges and the CSU.
- Improve training of community college counselors in the area of CSU requirements.

### **3. What changes need to occur at each level (campus and system) in order to do what each should be doing?**

#### **CSU**

- Repeal Proposition 209 and other anti-affirmative action policies.
- Keep costs low enough so that the CSU is affordable.

#### **Fresno State and CSU**

- Increase collaboration with other institutions and all levels (increased communication between community college counselors and Fresno State/CSU counselors).
- Address issues regarding undocumented students.
- Partner with major cultural groups. Examples of appropriate groups in the Fresno area include those of African American, Native American, Latino/and Hmong/South East Asian populations.
- Continue to increase efforts to education parents about how their child can access Fresno State and the CSU—expand PIQE (Parents Institute for Quality Education) in our area.
- Develop an accountability system.
- Create a task force for to address instructional gaps.

- Increase faculty training and awareness of issue surrounding special learners.

**4. How could technology help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area?**

**Fresno State**

- Use technologies such as remote learning tools and two-way video casting to more effectively communicate with schools in rural areas.
- Continue efforts such as that of the ATI initiative.
- Look into establishing satellite campuses.

**CSU**

- Increase the use of distance learning.

**Fresno State and CSU**

- Use technology (i.e. CSU Mentor) to help students plan academic transfer programs.

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*Domain 2: Connecting to P-12 Schools and to Community Colleges: Forming valuable partnerships with P-12, Community Colleges and interested community constituencies and use recommendations from these partnerships in the preparation of teachers from both segments.*

**1. What are the strengths of our campus and the CSU system now?**

- Foster comprehensive and innovative connections through teacher and leadership preparation with other entities as demonstrated by career ladder programming, leadership institutes, professional development, partner schools programs, on-line deliverables.
- Demonstrate outreach and articulation to community colleges with our transfer centers and comprehensive outreach to all feeder high schools (College Ambassador Program).
- Link international teachers and administrators with local school districts through innovative global education model.
- Recognize service learning model across all the disciplines and in reciprocal partnerships in P-12.

**2. What would we like either, or both, to be doing better in the future?**

- Increase the participation of the under-served population in higher education.
- Recognize the issue of preparing educators for the Central Valley as an *all campus* responsibility.
- Strengthen Fresno State's impact as the vehicle for change within the central valley.

**3. What changes need to occur at each level (campus and system) in order to do what each should be doing?**

- Develop a specific model program such as FUSD/Fresno State that contains on-site HS student advising services.
- Raise the visibility and status of the Liberal Studies major at Fresno State and at other.
- Recognize teacher education and service learning and involvement in study abroad programs and extended studies in RTP process.
- Forge partnerships that address the state's workforce needs.

**4. How could technology help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area?**

- Increase the participation rate via electronic transcripts through Electronic Data Initiative (EDI) for advising purposes.
- Ensure that technology and data storage at the CSU and school local districts are compatible.
- Forge partnerships to improve access to data systems within CSU and links to other sources.

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*Domain 3: Fulfilling commitments to multiple stakeholders; identifying and reaching out to, partnering with, and serving our constituencies; maintaining and strengthening connections with internal stakeholders; publicizing and marketing strengths to emphasize the benefits of engagement with the CSU; and identifying strategies and policies that will sustain connections and make the system better stewards of state resources.*

*Stakeholders:* Stakeholders are defined as students, parents, alumni, friends, donors, community/regional business and industry, agriculture and government (local, state and federal).

## **1. What are the strengths of our campus and the CSU system now?**

### **Fresno State**

- Community engagement, regional presence, and location.
- Diversity, excellent faculty, dedicated staff, breadth and quality of programs as well as its affordability and access.
- Community/regional engagement provides human resources that power the region and contribute the economic well-being of the area.
- We provide expertise, research and problem solving to address community needs.
- To a lesser degree, we have strong private support, an excellent reputation in applied learning, and are a key force in a dynamic process.

### **CSU**

- The CSU system shares the campus's strengths in its diversity, excellent faculty, dedicated staff, affordability/access and breadth and quality of programs.
- The CSU system also provides state government influence.

## **2. What would we like either, or both, to be doing better in the future?**

### **Fresno State**

- We need to develop additional resources and align planning goals with existing and new resources.
- Additional efforts need to be made to recruit and retain excellent faculty and staff (being mindful of workloads and teaching loads).
- The campus needs to create a clear path for partnership and collaboration and provide excellent customer service to its stakeholders.

### **CSU**

- The system needs less bureaucracy, better customer services and increased advocacy for campuses and clear communications and facilitate cross campus collaboration.
- The system should focus on the recruitment and retention of excellent faculty and staff.

**3. What are the changes that need to occur at each level (campus and system) in order to do what each should be doing?**

**Fresno State**

- We need to increase grants, contracts, and private support while selecting funding priorities.
- We need to internally and externally promote the region as a premier destination.

**Fresno State and CSU**

- To continue to recruit and retain the best and brightest faculty and staff, the campus and the CSU system need to provide competitive salaries, collaborative opportunities and address housing issues.
- The campus and the CSU system need to engage in continued conversation regarding the balance between undergraduate and graduate education and the balance between promoting job readiness and educating citizens.

**4. How could technology help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area?**

**Fresno State**

- Provide better technical infrastructure for the day-to-day jobs on campus.

**CSU**

- Provide more technical tools to promote and sustain effective teaching.

**Fresno State and CSU**

- Without losing sight of the human connection, the campus and the CSU system could better achieve their goals and improve business processes by considering more online courses and degrees for students and working professionals

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***Domain 4: Ensuring success in student learning: assessing student learning, traditional and non-traditional pedagogy, comprehensive advising, tracking student success, measuring and improving transfer student success, campus internship programs, ensuring campus and system policies work in support of student success, supporting student participation in faculty research, scholarly and creative activities and preparing students with a global cross cultural competencies and technical capabilities.***

**1. What are the strengths of our campus and the CSU system now?**

**Fresno State**

- Ability to reach out and serve a very diverse cohort of students from the Central Valley.
- Ability to develop students' academic skills—particularly those of under prepared and first generation college students.
- Our commitment and capacity to facilitate graduation through multiple interventions.
- Dedicated faculty focused on improving teaching/learning through use of a variety of pedagogies.
- Engagement with the community.

**CSU**

- CSU is a vehicle for upward mobility for citizens across the state through its commitment to access.
- Centralized vs. Decentralized operations that balance autonomy with public accountability and efficiency while allowing campuses to take advantage of their strengths.
- Collaboration among campuses across the system.
- Shared governance with faculty and with students.
- The student focus of the system—students matter; the role of the CSSA in shared governance and the presence of two student trustees reflect this commitment.

**2. & 3. What would we like either, or both, to be doing better in the future and what changes need to occur at each level (campus and system) in order to do what each should be doing?**

**Fresno State**

- Continue to improve advising, mentoring, and career advising.
- Provide increased flexibility to advisors on course substitution for degree completion.
- Incorporate more career services into colleges/schools.
- Increase our focus on cultural competency across all stakeholders on the campus.
- Look for ways to expect some campus services to be offered after 5:00 pm to meet our growing evening student population.
- Increase visibility of term-to-term class schedules to let students know what courses will be offered in the future-up front—2/3 semester class schedules.
- Improve access to prerequisite courses to facilitate graduation.
- Look for better ways to measure success, particularly for transfer students.

- Develop post-graduate outcomes to measure (i.e. employment in field, continued graduate education success, credential program, and general student satisfaction).
- Improve communication internally, as well as externally, regarding alumni success stories, best practices within the campus and within the CSU-- leverage the power of our campus diversity and our community engagement.
- Share success stories with campus and off-campus constituencies; including students.
- Enhance and expand our summer bridge program.
- Establish standards for internship programs.
- Increase opportunities for participation in faculty research, especially for undergraduates.
- Examine faculty reassigned time opportunities for research, scholarly, and creative activities.

### CSU

- Look for more creative ways to measure student success—besides graduation rates.
- Improve system-wide tracking of native and transfer students through to graduation.
- Be more focused on academic support tools--too many choices can be confusing.
- Improve the opportunity for each campus to access system resources to courses on campuses other than their own; especially specialized courses that may only be offered on a few campuses.
- Create greater opportunities to share classes across CSU campuses; especially specialized courses.
- Look at faculty workload/teaching load in light of research and scholarship expectations.
- Consider reducing teaching load to nine units; clarify the research expectations and the necessary balance between a focus on undergraduate and graduate.
- Need to take a hard look at clarifying the role of graduate education vs. undergraduate education across the system.
- Look at the amount of funding dedicated to graduate education.
- Need to recognize student demographics in providing our services recognizing that different students need different services.
- Facilitate shared governance for students through improved timing of meetings that are more congruent with students' schedules.

**4. How could technology help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area?**

- Utilize social networking (myspace, facebook, etc.) as a way to reach students with information.
- Explore the potential of the PeopleSoft system to provide students with reliable, accurate, up-to-date information to improve academic advising.
- Utilize streaming videos, pod-casting, and other student popular technology to deliver information to them (to include courses).
- Make specialized courses across the curriculum more accessible through technology.
- Consider creating a system-wide identity management tool that would allow faculty, staff, and students to easily be tracked and make services available to them on campuses other than their own across the system.

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***Domain 5: Faculty/Staff excellence to promote student success: Valuing faculty and staff excellence as an important factor in student success; recruiting, retaining and supporting high quality faculty and staff and supporting service excellence to support student achievement, satisfaction and persistence.***

**1. What are the strengths of our campus and the CSU system now?**

- Dedicated, high-quality faculty and staff, despite salary issues.
- We offer honors programs for our students; e.g. Smittcamp Family Honors Program.
- Engaged with students – faculty teach what students will be doing in support of the *New California*.
- We offer recognition awards for faculty; department support, and offer creative ways to support faculty with incentives other than money, e.g. release time, research support and professional development.
- Departments/Colleges create a sense of community for students and faculty
- We have a diverse faculty and student body.
- We offer a strong benefit package and educational opportunities for employees and their family members.
- Student engagement inside and outside of the classroom.
- Send a message to new hires – if you care about students, come to Fresno State:
  - Key points to new faculty hires; these are not Harvard/Yale type students
  - Focus on students by campus – this is a great place for those who want to teach
  - We do a great job in helping our students to gain confidence and learn

- We offer programs that ‘speak to the area’, e.g. teacher preparation and agriculture – what we teach is what our graduates will do
- We are proud of our dedicated faculty who go the extra mile

**2. What would we like either, or both, to be doing better in the future?**

- Promote our successes.
- Offer access to affordable housing (lower interest rates/short-term housing for incoming faculty and administrators); day-care; offer higher relocation dollars.
- Utilizing technology and access (on-line instruction); number of classrooms with technology advancements.
- Emphasize the mission of the institution.
- Focus on staff-- some feel staff in a worse position than faculty; need recognition.
- Build a dynamic, intellectual and creative culture on our campus:
  - Showcase faculty in an annual university-wide festival of talent and accomplishments open to the public.
- Create a faculty success center to build intra-campus synergy and support research dedicated to creating community and fostering cross-curricular collaboration.
- Create a central student assistance center where students can go to resolve problems in all areas of the university mission. The center would house "experts" that are trained to assist students centrally rather than in multiplicity in every department.
- Eliminate duplication of services in every department and across campus. Time is our greatest resource and duplication of effort erodes time and productivity campus-wide.

**3. What are the changes that need to occur at each level (campus and system) in order to do what each should be doing?**

- Respond to highly functioning and multi-tasking student body.
- Focus on building strengths; e.g. our new library (“research” skills vs. “googling”).
- Technology increases access:
  - Recruiting
  - Student Success
  - Promoting the university
- Mentoring junior faculty; need ways to channel support to junior faculty; junior faculty come, publish and leave.
- Use internal mechanisms in the system to provide career progression to staff.
- Support high performance by faculty, staff & administrators:
  - Need to turn to state legislators

- Address problems recruiting and retaining top faculty – regional attractiveness going away – no longer affordable California living; give start-up incentive to come her)
- Focus on valuing the campus; familiarity about Fresno State (not prestigious, but excellent dedicated faculty and staff devoted to our students).
- New faculty need support; plan to make the library a resource for new faculty; create liaisons within Fresno State to support faculty.
- Faculty recruitments – blanket resources, cast a wide net for those within Academic Personnel Office to give folks reminders.
- Need to let faculty know that we are a welcoming campus, noticed during interview process that diversity is popular reason why we are able to attract; truly a strength; must support them with resources once they get here; department must create environment to bring faculty into culture of dept. with socials, etc. in order to get people to make connections within Fresno State & external community.
- Leaders can create that sense of community for new faculty; feel more engaged with department family.
- Those of diverse backgrounds are heavily recruited to other places; they must live – cost of living issues, no longer have natural advantages to come to Fresno State; multi-cultural nature of the community; make it better known to others applying; some discount the “usual” journals; extra things demonstrated by others on campus; list of publications in which can advertise for faculty positions; put yourself in some person’s shoes – don’t want to label; should ask question why won’t you come here; we sell institution short – should be the biggest cheerleaders for the institution.
- Honors programs with colloquia at the department/school/college levels, similar to colloquia in cross-curricular honors programs to foster student interest in research and collaboration with faculty – campus.
- Gather information from students, on a regular basis, especially in the area of technology to assess the ways they are currently learning and gathering information (access their input regarding the best ways to teach them using current technology) – systemwide.
- Centralize resources – campus.
- Promote research - systemwide.
- Reward faculty for student success - systemwide.

**4. How could technology help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area?**

- The distinction between lab and classroom will become more blurred; faculty look at technology high end software as well as writing labs for various programs.
- Need to provide basics to all students; thrust of the system to move forward; use to our advantage; need tech support.
- Website updates; on-line hiring.

- Accessing on-campus resources from anywhere globally; now can do from home, school, etc.; accessing courses on-line through programs/instruction.
- Decrease the “digital gap.” As technology receives greater emphasis in the curriculum, we must make a more concerted effort to provide/offer technology/online accessibility for all students (possibly 24/7).
- Stay ahead of technology application and use by students.
- Install a campus-wide Wi-Fi network and develop relationships with city/county to provide access points.

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*Domain 6: Now and in the Future: Campus/System Identity: Defining and articulating core strengths and essential identity and identifying and revising those policies that hinder identification of our core strengths and identity and engage key state and national policy-makers in dialogue about the future of the CSU.*

**1. What are the strengths of our campus and the CSU system now?**

**Fresno State**

- Community connections/regional focus.
- Applied learning – hands on learning.
- Leader in system initiatives – technology planning, PeopleSoft implementation.
- Caliber and dedication of faculty and staff.
- Growing graduate programs.
- Farm Lab, enology and viticulture, water programs.
- Heart of the agricultural world.
- Library enhancement.
- Centers and Institutes.

**CSU**

- Size – two million alumni, 23 campuses.
- National recognition – largest system; potential/advantage.
- Growth/demand.
- Focus on undergraduate education.
- Strong systems in place – decentralization-individual campus identities.

**Fresno State and CSU**

- Diversity in programs and populations.
- Longevity – the oldest campus is San Jose – recently celebrated their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Access and affordability.

## **2. What would we like either, or both, to be doing better in the future?**

### **Fresno State**

- External PR – including outreach at all levels.
- Engaging our proto-typical alumni.
- Better use of technology.
- Branding – name identity.
- Put education to work – share our knowledge with the community.
- Community leadership in sustainability/ ‘greenness’.
- Globalize curriculum.
- Recruitment and retention as employer of choice.
- Attaining and retention of ethnic cultural groups – particularly African Americans.
- P-12 preparation.
- Improve integration of athletics and academics – both on campus and in the public eye.

### **CSU**

- External PR – including advocacy.
- Enhanced labor relations – Collective Bargaining Agreements.
- ATI – Web and instructional materials that are ADA compliant.
- CSU identity – improve logo.
- Generate increased fiscal report from the State.

### **Fresno State and CSU**

- Improve external PR.
- Address faculty workloads.
- Streamline initiatives/processes – eliminate those that are not necessary.
- Share resources between campuses – knowledge, academics, etc.
- Clarification of CSU and Fresno State position on International students.

## **3. What are the changes that need to occur at each level (campus and system) in order to do what each should be doing?**

### **Fresno State**

- On-going scholarships for international students as well as our students traveling abroad.
- Change from our style of information reporting to communication.
- Commitment to us vs. them – commitment to the entire university.
- Clarification and recognition of distribution of workload among faculty.
- Improved support of communications/advancement.

## CSU

- Improve execution of initiatives and get the tools to do so to the campuses.

## Fresno State and CSU

- Develop infrastructures to move to the next level in research, development, etc.

### **4. How could technology help to achieve goals and/or improve business processes in this area?**

## Fresno State

- More agile response to needs.

## CSU

- Improve infrastructure; improve assessment.
- Centralize - pool information.
- Information disposition – create a matrix; eliminate boxes, warehouses, etc.
- Technological support for workstations and individuals.

## Fresno State and CSU

- Use technologies that are best for various audiences, e.g., students, alumni, etc.