

**Access to Excellence**  
**Humboldt State University Campus Report**  
**to the Chancellor's Office**  
**March 2007**

As part of the California State University's Board of Trustees initiative to define a new strategic plan for the CSU, each of the 23 CSU campuses was asked to plan a day of consultation and discussion concerning the future direction of the CSU and how the individual campuses would fit into such a plan.

Campus Process: In preparation for the above-mentioned day of discussion, ad hoc committees comprising faculty, staff, administrators and students were formed to determine what questions would provide valuable input into the strategic plan and what discussions would be productive for both HSU and the system. Since HSU is currently involved in the WASC re-accreditation process, the questions were developed as part of the existing WASC themes. Once the questions were finalized, they were made available to the broader HSU community in the form of a moodle survey. Very few members of the campus community participated in the online survey.

The campus discussion took place on February 26, 2007. A professional facilitator, Roger James, was engaged for the day-long discussions in order to maximize the time and quality of the campus discussions.

Approximately 100 participants (27 faculty, 17 staff, 27 administrators, 21 students and 4 community members) took part in the day's event. Participants were asked to sit at small tables mixing themselves by their status at the university in order to bring a broad perspective to the small discussion groups. Each group was assigned a particular question to discuss and then reported the best ideas from each group to all of the participants. The chair of the board of trustees, Roberta Achtenberg, and a representative from the Chancellor's Office, Joan Bissell, observed the day's activities. Professional scribes recorded the proceedings on large tablets in front of the entire group and minutes were recorded separately on a computer.

The following are representative ideas and thoughts drawn from the discussion of each question:

## **Warm-up question:**

### **How is HSU important to you professionally and personally – and to our community?**

- HSU is teaching centered; students like the small classes, the beauty of the environment, and community interactions.
- HSU has a unique role since it is a rural campus, and it is important in that it provides access to faculty and staff. It also plays an important role in the technical and scientific education in the community.
- Students are committed to learning from the faculty, and the faculty are committed to teaching the students. Some of HSU's students are from low density remote areas; the campus and Arcata provide a transition point from a rural setting to a larger world.
- The campus is important to the community in cultural and economic terms; for many, if the university were not here, they would not want to live here. The campus has an impact on the region: it provides educational opportunities to students who would not have them otherwise.
- A partnership with the city of Arcata is beneficial for both the university and the city.
- HSU contributes in a major way to the economy, and students bring in resources. Faculty, staff and students contribute to environmental concerns and social justice issues of the region as well as the broader world.
- HSU is the only university in the region and as such must provide high quality programs across the board: from teachers, to business people, to nursing, etc. it is vital to the social fabric and economy of the area.
- HSU has the only library with government documents available in the region.
- HSU has some unique “flavors” – such as the Campus Center for Appropriate Technology (CCAT).

## **Domain 4 – Ensuring Success in Student Learning**

### **1. What are the core expectations that we have for HSU graduates? How do we know if our graduates are meeting those expectations?**

- There are three different areas of output - cognitive outcomes, both broad and focused in terms of specialty skills; interpersonal outcomes regarding diverse groups; and civic outcomes regarding entering and exiting communities appropriately.
- It is important to focus on student performance; what do they do before and after they graduate? Before graduation, areas for consideration include civil behavior in the classroom; writing skills; how performance is reflected in portfolios and capstone projects; and field experiences. After graduation, looking at alumni accomplishments; how successful are they in entering the work world and finding a career; and do they stay connected with the institution are ways of accessing student success.
- Specific examples of student success to consider include the following: competency in their discipline; ability to communicate verbally and orally across cultures and disciplines; ability to present oneself; understand different perspectives and contexts; recognize diversity in thought; engage in research and reflect upon credibility of a source; express confidence in self; develop a skill set; and be marketable.
- Other points to consider include the success of alumni regarding licensing exams; feedback received from employers; work on projects requiring teamwork and creative problem solving; classroom performance; portfolios; and the ability to present to multiple audiences.
- Also important is the development of communication skills, across disciplines and cultures. In addition, a broad set of experiences that are assessed by students for self-reflection is required, as well as the belief that all education is shared across the university.

### **2. In order to maintain high levels of rigor, what level of support is necessary to help all students succeed?**

- It is essential to recognize students' needs in nonacademic areas and understand their point of view.
- It is important that students know what services are available, and any services provided to students must be of sufficient quality to support in-class challenges.
- Advising is a critical component: the quality of advising must be addressed. Faculty must be trained and mentored to be effective advisors.
- The level of rigor has to be set so it is achievable.

- Strategies for support are needed; for example, a freshman seminar should be available to all students during the year.
- Better library resources are needed for students.
- A learning commons approach for the library regarding information technology is needed for students.
- Smaller class sizes work better for this student body; students often choose HSU for its small classes.

### **3. What factors and policies influence student success?**

#### **a. Characteristics of successful students and/or programs:**

- Students are engaged in their learning process, critical thinkers, and engaged in activities outside of the classroom.
- There is evidence of external qualities that enable students to be successful after graduation, whether in their personal life or their professional career.
- Students have well-rounded articulation skills; the ability to think; they can be flexible; and they are willing to take responsibility. One measure of success is time to degree.
- Not having to work full time while going to school would be most helpful to students.

#### **b. What steps can be taken to emphasize the enhancement factors?**

- The importance of advising was stressed. It must be recognized that not all students work at the same pace; personal needs must be considered.
- External measures can be taken so that students are advised early and provided with opportunities to learn about the available majors and to establish their majors.
- Clear expectations for learning need to be established.
- Co-curricular opportunities would be helpful.
- Student loads need to be measured on what is reasonable for the number of units. It is recommended that individual departments exercise local control and make this determination.

#### **c. Do system policies support student success? Give examples.**

- Some policies, such as financial aid policies that require unit caps and unit loads, may affect student success.
- Students need the ability and predictability to plan - both financially and when to take which classes. They need to consider what they will do when leaving the university.

- d. Do campus and system policies complement each other?
  - We need to revise the system policy that looks at every campus as being the same, from funding needs to student outcomes.
  - A system policy that respects and recognizes that a smaller campus is acceptable, either for mentoring purposes or for entering the larger world, is needed.
4. **How do we develop an effective mix of traditional and nontraditional pedagogies?**
- a. **How do we assess the unit value of non-traditional pedagogies, such as internships, research, distance education, etc.?**
- It was difficult to define traditional and nontraditional pedagogies. The nontraditional pedagogies need to create opportunities for greater student action. It would be most beneficial if a forum supporting a broad range were developed so that pedagogies would have far-reaching effects.
  - The mix depends on who the students are. The best way to know the best mix is to continue to actively experiment. “Best” is defined in different ways; it is the university’s role to identify its meaning.
  - Regarding unit load, student credit unit and WTUs need to be separated. Student credit unit is based on a reasonable level of expectation; WTUs are based on a broad range of pedagogies, but respect the time and energy that faculty must invest in a course. This varies from course to course and over time; local control is recommended.
5. **The reality is that HSU lacks diversity among its faculty, students, and staff. Are there ways we can compensate for this lack of diversity so that HSU students might be better prepared for the society within which they will be working?**
- a. **How do we enhance the academic success of our traditionally underrepresented students?**
- A better way to ask the question is: how can we change? How do we help the campus community to understand diversity as an educational process?
  - Faculty and staff need to be assisted in identifying gaps in achievement levels.
  - What can lead us toward hiring more diverse faculty and staff?
  - We must work to infuse diversity into the curriculum and support all students in general. Examples include encouraging attendance at national and international conferences and facilitating relationships with the off-campus community.
  - Learning outcomes require interpersonal and intercultural competency that students should have at graduation. One approach would be to focus on what we are doing now that works rather than focusing on problems.

## **Domain 5: Faculty/Staff Excellence to Promote Student Success**

### **1. What are appropriate measures of faculty “quality”?**

#### **a. How do we assure that current performance evaluation policies/procedures recognize and reward the varied contributions that faculty make to the campus community and beyond? Can these procedures be improved and if so, how?**

- The importance of a “caring factor” by faculty was stressed (for example, knowing students’ names within the first few weeks of the term). How can this be measured and rewarded?
- This is a teaching-centered campus and it is important that excellent teaching is recognized and rewarded.

#### **b. What faculty attributes enhance student progress to degree or student success?**

- Important attributes as described by students include: faculty should have command of their subject matter; they should be organized, interesting, and not bland; and they should provide as much feedback as possible to students.
- The student to faculty ratio is important; smaller classes are better.
- Class material should include real life experiences, not just teaching from a textbook.
- The importance of advising (that is, helping students toward a degree and ensuring that they are pursuing an appropriate degree) and the subsequent time to degree were recognized by students as critical to their development.
- Not all faculty are good advisors so not all faculty should be asked to advise students. The role of the department chair is to look at the faculty resources in the department and assign duties based on a reasoned determination of the individual.
- Students expect the campus to have smart classrooms, and these classrooms should be available so that faculty can teach a variety of pedagogies. Linked with the smart classroom is the importance of physical space for alternative pedagogies.

#### **c. What professional development activities are needed for faculty?**

- Faculty development opportunities are needed to improve teaching effectiveness; there are no resources on campus to help with this. In general, a faculty member is not trained in how to be an effective teacher.
- Funding is needed (grants and travel opportunities) to help faculty with professional development.

- d. What needs to be done to recruit, retain, and develop high quality faculty?
- A salary package is important; it must be reviewed and revised as necessary.
- It is important to be honest with new faculty regarding workload.
- “Trailing partners/spouses” also need to be considered; affordable housing is important. This is an increasingly important issue in order to attract and retain quality, young faculty.

**2. What are appropriate measures of staff and administration “quality”?**

**a. How do we assure that current performance evaluation policies/procedures recognize and reward the varied contributions that staff and administrators make to the campus community and beyond? Can these procedures be improved and if so, how?**

- Evaluations of staff and administrators should be thoughtful and consistent, with attention given to career plans and building on current strengths.
- Many employees are not happy with the current forms: perhaps consider an evaluation that includes a dialogue rather than merely using a rating scale.
- Perhaps it would be better to tailor evaluation forms to specific positions.

**b. What staff and administration attributes enhance student progress to degree or student success?**

- Staff and administrators should be accessible and good listeners.
- They should have a personal relationship with students, utilize a customer service mentality and approach, and be able to make difficult decisions.

**c. What professional development activities are needed for staff and administrators?**

- Additional opportunities for professional development for administrators and staff (workshops, seminars) are needed.
- We need to create a dashboard of instruments to measure progress in meeting university goals.
- Consider “job shadowing” and cross-training to raise the awareness level of what is involved in a job and to develop new skills that will lead to advancement.

- d. What needs to be done to recruit, retain, and develop high quality staff and administrators?**
- If we are hiring from outside the area, affordable housing is needed.
  - We must look at the entire family of the employee; the university should host an event for spouses/families to connect.
  - We need to provide professional growth opportunities for staff; many feel they are not able to advance in their job.
- 3. How can faculty and student affairs professionals work together to develop an effective mix of curricular and co-curricular experiences?**
- a. What measures might be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a co-curricular student experience to enhance student maturation and academic success?**
- The idea of faculty and staff working together for student success must be promoted.
  - It is important to recognize co-curriculum.
- b. How are co-curricular experiences developed and implemented?**
- Reinforce the need for a “culture of evidence.”
  - It is important to remember that learning occurs both in and out of classroom.
- c. Is there a review process?**
- It is critical that we establish a unified vision of learning outcomes, both in and out of the classroom.
  - A system is needed that will reduce the prejudice between faculty and staff.
- d. Should there be a review process for the value of co-curricular experiences? If so, who is responsible for such a review?**
- We need to reinforce the importance of being a small campus and recognize that not all CSU campuses are the same.
- 4. How do we prepare our existing staff, faculty and administrators to work with underrepresented students and to promote their success? Here underrepresented should be interpreted broadly to include ethnicity, ability, gender, age, etc.**
- The first item is to discuss what is meant by student success; that is, graduation, retention, etc.
  - We need to facilitate promoting personal relationships between staff and students, and between faculty and students.
  - Extracurricular activities must be encouraged.

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

### **1. How does the CSU define and articulate its core strengths and essential identity in the national and international context?**

#### **a. Identifying those national and international priorities that should become part of the CSU's core identity.**

- The priorities should include the core strengths of the CSU: that is, the size of the system (it is the largest university system in the world with 23 campuses) and the diversity of its programs; the passion for teaching and the progressive thinking of the faculty; and the strengths of its programs (HSU may differ from other campuses).
- Progressive thinking toward sustainability and environmental issues is of paramount importance at this time.
- More emphasis on quality and the strength of the system as a whole is needed.
- We need to establish value-driven collaboration yet maintain the specialized strengths on individual campuses.
- Access to education is important. Defining general education requirements may be needed; the workplace is changing and some skills may become obsolete. Students need to be taught to think, not just perform job skills.
- Greater importance needs to be given to research and research facilities.

#### **b. Affirming and assuring the vitality of the values of shared governance in an environment of student participation and collective bargaining. How does the system and its campuses ensure that students, staff and faculty have the information they need to help make shared governance effective?**

- Transparency and communication are key factors in making shared governance effective.
- Processes must be known and discussions need to be open to large audiences; more meetings like this one should be offered.
- A balanced approach to governance is imperative even though it is such a large system with the 23 campuses.
- We need to understand the uniqueness of other universities, and we need to learn from them.
- Committee meeting notes should be made available system wide.
- Perhaps rotating the trustee meetings so they are held at various campuses would allow for a more inclusive feeling by the individual campuses.

- 2. What is the role of the system and its individual campuses in defining and supporting the strengths of the CSU and its identity, assuring appropriate balance among educational programs, and enabling campuses to provide a diversity of educational opportunities for our students?**
- a. Which policies need revision to help the system and the campuses ensure that their strengths are maintained?**
- Increasing enrollment at HSU needs to occur. One way this could be accomplished is by distributing scholarships to local counselors for local students and drawing our base of enrollment from the local region.
- b. What role should the system take in developing aspects of the CSU's mission such as research and online education?**
- Perhaps the role of the CSU system with the campuses is to be responsible for "branding" the entire system; this will remove the identity of individual campuses.
- c. What could the system do to assist campuses that struggle to meet enrollment targets?**
- The growth model is not working for HSU.
  - Establishing a pool of funds called the Chancellor's Grants should be made available to campuses with low enrollment; this would allow such campuses to offer enrollment to students from other regions of the state.
  - Every campus has a certain amount of fixed costs.
  - Funding needs to be based on program mix (some programs are more expensive than others).
  - The cost of FTEs at HSU is higher than at other campuses. The system needs to consider different funding for such campuses.
  - Should we all be "Carnegie" campuses?
  - Should we move toward specialization? Some campuses have specialized study.
- d. How can the system assure that smaller campuses with distinctive missions and special needs maintain excellent programs?**
- It is important for the system to recognize the economies of scale efficiency introduced at the system level (e.g., distance education).
  - All campuses need access to certain programs and databases; Humboldt does not have such access due to the economy of scale.
  - Leave local advertising to the individual campuses.

**e. What changes in the allocation of resources would be required to ensure the diversity of academic programs, co-curricular programs, rural experience, and diverse learning environments that a significant number of our students desire?**

- CSU is behind the curve regarding distance learning. It would make sense for the system to coordinate distance learning at the system level rather than at the campus level.
- Perhaps CSU should follow the same admission policy as the UC system: students are admitted to the system and then to individual campuses to ensure that campuses will not have enrollment problems.
- If an enrollment cap were placed on some of the larger campuses, perhaps more students would attend the smaller campuses.

**3. What is the system's role in articulating its mission to state and national policy makers to ensure that resources are predictably available to the CSU?**

**a. How can our students, through the CSSA, gain access to the information needed to play a more central role in influencing the outcome of political decisions about the allocation of resources for the CSU?**

- Students should assist in making policy of student fees so they can understand how the CSU works.
- Students need to get involved in policy making and lobbying in Sacramento; use of radio time or bringing policy into classroom discussions also would help with this.
- Students need to have dialogues with policy makers regarding enrollment-based funding.
- Students should assist in fee-setting policies.

**b. How can the system engage policy makers in helping us define the vision of the CSU and then develop long-term funding plans to ensure access and excellence of educational opportunity?**

- We need to make ourselves visible to national policy makers, and we need to identify CSU as being different, yet parallel to the UC system, so that equitable funding will be made available to the CSU campuses.
- If policy were integrated into classroom curriculum, (for example, writing letters in English classes to policy makers or giving assignments to political science students), both students and legislators would be better versed in some of the needs of the campus.
- Enrollment-based funding does not support optimal experiences for faculty and students. Funding should be based on the cost of programs; we should not sacrifice programs just to increase enrollment.

- HSU should take a leadership role in accountability.
  - We need to recognize that the CSU campuses are different, yet they have some similarities.
- 4. What is the system's role in alleviating the tension between the desire to provide access and excellent education to all qualified students, and the desire to ensure that campuses with specialized needs and missions are accommodated?**
- a. What can the system do and what can the campus do to address the issue of affordability within the context of access and excellence in relation to individual campus missions?**
- High-cost programs need to be balanced with low-cost programs.
  - Steps need to be taken so that the overall cost of the system is reduced as well as student cost.
  - Is our current fee policy/structure working?
  - We need to develop a sliding scale for tuition, perhaps based on personal income or family income.
  - Support systems for affordability (such as financial aid support for first-time students) need to be maintained.
  - We need to revisit the mode in level funding – a campus receives more money for more costly programs.
  - Political advocacy and legislative activity need to be increased.
  - Remediation or differential funding for some campuses may need to be considered.
- b. Which programs should remain on individual campuses and what can be done more effectively at a system level?**
- By maintaining a comprehensive and diverse curriculum, we increase the quality of the educational process.
  - There should be a more rigorous CSU system review of program development so that programs do not compete with one another.
  - Making all campuses more “green” will save money.
- 5. How do we address challenges and opportunities arising from the arrival of the “digital age,” including appropriate development of on-line and distance learning?**
- a. What role should student academic choices and needs play in the system's support of different learning environments?**
- Different needs are based on different learning styles and majors.

- Different learning styles must be considered and we need to meet students' needs regarding such differences.
- Offering summer distance learning programs may be helpful. The content could be designed to keep pace with the current field.
- Marketing designs should reflect a current representation of HSU.

**b. How can we ensure that students continue to have the opportunity to interact directly with faculty in the digital age?**

- The level of access and intimacy in face-to-face classes contributes to a higher participation level in class. Some are comfortable in a distance learning environment, but face-to-face seems to be the preference.
- A combination of both distance learning and face-to-face learning would be optimal.
- If distance learning is used, faculty must do everything possible to make the students feel known and to maintain a connection with them.
- Professors need to be diligent about keeping their office hours.
- Course content should keep pace with what is current in the field.

**c. How should the CSU encourage the use of information technology to improve access to higher education and improve the quality and cost effectiveness of academic offerings?**

- We need to consider leveraging the CSU "purchasing power" with other companies; this can be used to service the needs of students.
- Faculty and staff need to be evaluated on their technical abilities and advisory skills.
- There is an expectation by students that faculty will use particular resources or at least know about such resources.
- It may be a good idea to leverage system-wide support for distance learning similar to online enrollment, which will consolidate the 23 campuses.

**Access to Excellence**  
**February 26, 2007**  
**Kate Buchanan Room**

**Agenda**

- 10:00-10:30      Introductory Remarks
- 10:30-12:30      Session 1 Discussions  
                         Domain 4 - Ensuring Success in Student Learning  
                         Domain 5 - Faculty/Staff Excellence to Promote Student Success
- 12:30-2:00        LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00-3:30         Session 2 Discussions  
                         Domain 6 - Now and in the Future: Campus/System Identity
- 3:30-4:30         Summary and Closing
- 4:30                ADJOURN