

**California State University, Sacramento**  
**Access to Excellence**  
**Campus Conversation: March 20, 2007**  
**Breakout Discussion and General Assembly Notes**

The meeting was conducted by the Chair of the Faculty Senate, Michael Fitzgerald, and the Provost, Joseph F. Sheley. Visitors included CSU Board of Trustee Members Robert Linscheid and Carol Chandler, CSU Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer, Gary Reichard, CSU Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Research and Resources, Marsha Hirano-Nakanishi, and Statewide Academic Senate Chair, Marshelle Thobaben.

The conversation lasted three hours. After general discussion, attendees moved to any of the six breakout groups in which they had an interest. The breakout sessions were facilitated by members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The attendees then reconvened for a reporting out of discussion points and continued conversation.

The agenda for the conversation:

**Access to Excellence**  
March 20, 2007  
University Union Ballroom III

**1:00 p.m. – Welcome**

- Faculty Senate Chair Michael Fitzgerald
- University Provost Joseph Sheley

**1:10 p.m. – Introductions**

- Alexander Gonzalez, President, California State University, Sacramento
- Gary Reichard, CSU Executive Vice Chancellor & Chief Academic Officer
- CSU Trustee Robert Linscheid and CSU Trustee Carol Chandler
- Marshelle Thobaben, Statewide Academic Senate Chair
- Marsha Hirano-Nakanishi, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Research and Resources

**1:15 p.m. – Access to Excellence Perspectives**

- Gary Reichard, CSU Executive Vice Chancellor & Chief Academic Officer
- CSU Trustees Robert Linscheid and Carol Chandler
- Marshelle Thobaben, Statewide Academic Senate Chair

**1:30 p.m. – Instructions to domain groups**

- Faculty Senate Chair Michael Fitzgerald
- University Provost Joseph Sheley

**1:45 p.m. – Domain groups to breakout rooms**

**Folsom Room** – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Access domain: *Assuring Access*

**Lobby Suite** – 1<sup>st</sup> floor

Access domain: *Connecting to P-12 Schools and to Community Colleges*

**Oak Room** – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Access domain: *Fulfilling Commitments to Multiple Stakeholders*

**Orchard Suite I** – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Access domain: *Ensuring Success in Student Learning*

**Orchard Suite II** – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Access domain: *Faculty & Staff Excellence to Promote Student Success*

**Summit Room** – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Access domain: *Now and in the Future: Campus/System Identity*

**2:00 p.m.-2:50 p.m. – Breakout discussion of domains in groups**

**3:00 p.m. – Groups reconvene in University Union Ballroom**

**3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m. – Reports from groups**

**3:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m. – Coffee & informal discussions**

**4:00 p.m. – Adjourn**

Reports from the breakout groups:

**DOMAIN 1: ASSURING ACCESS**

1. (for CSU) Access should not be defined as simply ethnic diversity of the student population and low tuition fees. It also includes the overall costs of going to college and retention of all students beyond the first year.
  - a) We should create outreach programs for students earlier in their educational experience, even down to elementary students.
  - b) We must continue lobbying at the federal and state government levels to make financial aid reflect the rising cost of attaining a college education, Pell and Cal grants
  - c) We should have the Early Assessment Program (EAP) reach out to students earlier in their career to help better make them college eligible.
2. (for CSU & CSUS) Encourage ethnic diversity in faculty ranks to serve as role models, particularly for students of color.
3. (for CSUS) Retention efforts need to go beyond just the 1st year experience.
  - a) revisit allocation of money to 1st year and perhaps develop a phase II program. Look at 2nd year programs like SB 65.
  - b) raise funds for programs like the Guardian Scholars program.
4. (for CSU) Reactivate and/or restructure programs for transfer students such as the Faculty Student Mentor Program (FSMP).
5. (for CSU & CSUS) Increase communication between CSU, community colleges, and secondary schools about college preparation.

## **DOMAIN 2: CONNECTING TO P-12 SCHOOLS AND TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

1. We should acknowledge and understand our strong vested interest in young people.
2. We need to develop a comprehensive campus inventory of partnerships, outreach, advising.
3. Advising and community outreach needs to be more coherent, responsible, and valued in the faculty ARTP process.
4. Image and reputation matter, and we need to figure out how to take advantage of that.
5. We must communicate via accessible, responsible, informative technology.

## **DOMAIN 3: FULFILLING COMMITMENTS TO MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS**

### **Brainstorming**

- Mentor current students
- Partnering with outside organizations and marketing our strengths – refine the marketing strategy and how to leverage it
- Reach out to community and ask what they want from us. Community advisory council helps with this (surveys and roundtable discussions).
- Communicating the good things we do (e.g. Facilities – sustainability; Revenue Management Program; etc.)
- Public Affairs promoting and communicating campus strengths. Historically, we haven't done well on this – much improvement recently
- Alumni Relations being active and reaching out to connect Alumni back to Sac State
- Need to reach out to where Alumni are located
- Advisory boards throughout campus
- Community drives we are involved in (luggage drive, Holiday food drive, etc.)
- Who are the stakeholders? Definition

### **Stakeholders**

- Students
- Faculty and Staff
- Employers
- Potential Students
- Parents
- Alum
- Community Leaders
- Government Officials
- Media
- Chancellor's Office / University System
- Donors
- Vendors
- Business Partners
- Civil Service (State and Local)
- Community
- Sometimes taken for granted in region
- Community engagement

- Communication (with each other and beyond)
- How to package all the campus success stories – let the community know
- Commercials (radio/tv), web, paper, etc.
- One central gathering place for the stories

#### Strategies

- Using the Web more Effectively
- Continue Communication to Alum
  - E-newsletter
  - Sac State Magazine
- Alumni Events
- Student Calls to Alum
  - Need information for those calls
    - Build Partnerships with Employers
    - Stay Connected with Alum
    - May need a CCE class
    - Connections with other Professionals
    - Etc.
    - Inviting the Community In

#### Priorities

- Communication
  - “tell our stories” (web and personal)
  - Celebrating achievements
  - Internally, finding the stories
  - Community Feedback (surveys)
  - Transparency and accountability
- Identify Stakeholders and Building Relationships
- Faculty, Staff, Alum and Students as Ambassadors
- Technology is a thread throughout (use when appropriate)

#### Policy Changes...

- System of transparency and accountability
- Revenue Management Program refined

#### **DOMAIN 4. ENSURING SUCCESS IN STUDENT LEARNING**

1. Graduation is not the only measure of student success and certainly not a primary measure of excellence. What is learned in the process is important. “Access, Retention and Graduation” are code words that really do not convey the meaning and value of an undergraduate education. We need a better definition of student success, one that reflects the learning outcomes expected of our graduates.
2. Concern was raised over the way in which students make choices about majors, looking more at future jobs and the perceived training and less at the importance of learning how to learn. Our expectations about providing students with a liberal education along with making appropriate choices of major are determined by our counseling and advising services and, in large part, by the quality of our General Education offerings.
3. We must establish effective intervention; understanding the different and unique life experiences students bring with them to the University. For example, our full-time students differ greatly from our part-time students in many of the important characteristics associated with student success. Each of our universities needs to better understand these differences, to understand the need for a variety of specialized support services that could facilitate student success for all our students. Many of our efforts are derived from anecdote. A “culture of evidence” should inform both our analysis and our decision-making.
4. We must devise systems that better serve our students. Students in search of various services are all too often at a loss in finding these services in a timely manner. Our goal should be to establish “one stop shopping” experiences for our students. Our success should be measured in not only the quality and effectiveness of the response but the ease and speed in securing that response. Services need to be integrated with networks defined that provide for quick access and response. For example, a faculty adviser must be able to quickly identify specific types of student services that might be needed by the student that he or she is currently advising. Academic Affairs and Student Affairs – faculty, staff and administration – should collaborate seamlessly to ensure access to the variety of support services that will facilitate student success. We should be continually checking to ensure that our students our being effectively served.
5. The University should develop programs that reach parents in our communities, informing them of the higher educational opportunities available to their students and the educational expectations needed to motivate their students to be successful. The University should continue this outreach effort when parents and students arrive at orientation, again informing them of the educational expectations needed to motivate their students to be successful. The fact that upwards of one-third of our graduating students continue to be the first in their family to earn a degree provides both opportunities and challenges to our outreach efforts as well as the relationships we promote once these students enter our university.
6. Student learning is everyone’s responsibility. How we ensure that the expected student learning outcomes that we specify are actually being achieved is the responsibility of the faculty. If we value the quality of the educational experiences provided to our students, we need to know whether this expected quality is being achieved. What is our standard and proof for asserting that our students, in general, are achieving our expected student

learning outcomes? These are the outcomes that characterize our General Education program as well as our majors.

7. Students need to be more actively engaged and challenged. Experiences need to be provided in which students are motivated to integrate their acquired knowledge, applying this knowledge in ways that go beyond the textbook examples. For example, projects and theses should be used to motivate students to integrate the learning experiences provided in the courses they take. In addition, all students should be provided with experiences beyond the classroom that provide active learning opportunities, integrating classroom with real world experiences. Engaging our surrounding community in the university's primary mission could provide for greater opportunities for service learning, internships, and cooperative learning experiences for our students.
8. We need to better understand the expectations of those that employ our students. What capabilities will our graduates need to be successful – capabilities beyond the specific training that characterize the differences in the job opportunities available to our students?

#### **DOMAIN 5: FACULTY/STAFF EXCELLENCE TO PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS**

\*We broke out into small groups and assigned topics:

1. **The issue of lacking academic mission and support for faculty and staff—we need to empower faculty and staff and students.**
  - a. Focus should be on academic excellence
  - b. Disagreement on this topic that we lack academic mission and support
2. **To promote excellence we need to resolve the faculty and staff salary issue—providing experiential learning and preparing our students for the workforce (close 2<sup>nd</sup> priority).**
3. Meritocracy (people promoted/advanced on merit) was an important issue to staff—folks asked if they were sure they wanted this as a virtue and Group 2 AGREED.
4. **Our major strength is the diversity of our workforce and weakness is retention of faculty, staff.**
5. Worry that Technology created more work
6. **Weakness is faculty, staff and administrative permanency—we don't have “permanency” in faculty, staff and indeed administration.**
7. **Need for greater STABILITY**
8. **Improve resources to staff**
9. **Increase tenured faculty and retain them**
10. **Faculty and staff are our most important and valuable resource**
  - Weakness (contributed by STUDENTS in group) = class (physical shape), student advising, and textbooks are too expensive.
  - NEED (faculty contributions) = we NEED more resources (funding) to allow faculty & staff excellence

## DOMAIN 6 – NOW AND IN THE FUTURE: CAMPUS/SYSTEM IDENTITY

Discussion, although free-ranging, focused on the issue of *Identity*, as it applied to both CSU system in general and California State University, Sacramento in particular. At times these topics were conflated, but most of the points made could apply to both institutions.

I. Theme: “What about Sac State?” -- Making Sac State (and the CSU) a destination campus.

This question appeared in several anecdotes from faculty recounting why they didn’t consider Sac State (or the CSU) as a first choice when selecting a university. Both institutions often seem to second-tier in student’s minds. (“*If you’re good, you don’t come here.*”). The question is why is this so and how can we change it.

*One possible explanation*: We try to be all things to all people, with the result that no coherent identity has emerged.

A possible solution (for both Sac State and CSU system), start thinking in terms of the following:

- Draw attention to centers of excellence that are likely to attract ambitious, high-achieving students --the Honors Program at CSUS, for example.
- Remember the parent’s POV: For them, outcomes are important; they want to know what they’re getting for their money. We need to be ready to answer this question in concrete terms.
- Play to our strengths – make them known. These include:
- Take advantage of our size – make use of resources collectively among campuses as a way of addressing resource needs in our perennial lean budget situation. (e.g., Library resources should be shared among campuses).
  - *Core Strength I*: Our excellence in teaching
  - *Core Strength II*: The opportunity for personal contact between students and faculty
  - *Core Strength III*: The accessibility & affordability it offers for a wide range of students in California.

II. Theme: Campus life and Identity. (Sac State Specific)

- “Sac State is boring.” (A student POV) – more attention needs to be given to campus life – This is central to developing a campus identity; a true campus life is missing.

III. Aspects of our identity that need promoting: People get a quality education at the CSU and we move them in the direction they want to go in their lives.

IV. Suggested slogans:

- “With a CSU education you can afford to dream.” (Student suggestion)
- We care (about the people who come here). – in contrast to big impersonal places like the UC or on-line degree programs.