WHY CREATE A STRATEGIC PLAN?

The Center for Community Engagement will celebrate its 18th anniversary in 2016. In preparation for this significant milestone, the Center took the opportunity to reflect on the first eighteen years and forecast new goals for the future. A group of diverse stakeholders made up of campus directors, campus leadership, program participants, community partners and Chancellor’s Office staff provided input during the process. This plan reflects the Center’s three-year vision, and its strategic directions and goals are aimed at deepening community engagement across the CSU System.

INTRODUCTION

The California State University (CSU) was built upon a mission to serve the people of California by providing accessible and high-quality educational opportunities. California is the nation’s largest producer of college graduates. California is the nation’s largest and most diverse system of senior higher education. 56% of CSU students are students of color (including over 136,000 Hispanic/Latino, over 65,000 Asian, and almost 21,000 African American students). Fourteen CSU campuses are Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), and ten are Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI). Roughly 35% of CSU students are in the first generation in their family to attend college. Nearly 13,000 CSU students are veterans or service members and their dependents. The CSU awards over 96,000 degrees per year. The CSU provides more than half of all undergraduate degrees to California’s Latino, African American and Native American students, and is a leader in transitioning veterans to the civilian workforce. For more than 50 years, the CSU has prepared students to be informed, active and committed leaders. It has served as a model of academic excellence and a catalyst for strengthening our communities intellectually, economically and socially. CSU campus community engagement programs have played a key role in our partnerships with California’s communities.

Established in March 1998, as the first of its kind in the country, the CSU Center for Community Engagement’s (CCE) mission is to advance the California State University's systemwide and multi-campus commitment to serving the economic, public policy and social needs of our state. Through advocacy, innovation and leadership, the Center supports campus efforts that are rooted in the exchange and production of knowledge and resources in mutually beneficial partnerships with our local and global communities.

THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, and WORKFORCE LANDSCAPE

Welcome to California – where extreme poverty, significant climate change, and the widening racial generation gap define the 21st Century. “California, continues to have – by far – the nation’s highest level of poverty, affecting nearly a quarter of the state’s 38 million residents. Indicators of climate change are reaching all-time highs and lows as California’s drought reached a new record in May 2015 when the water mark barely reached 5% of the May average, the lowest reading since 1950. Upon declaring 2015 the driest winter in the history of California, the Governor issued an executive order mandating substantial water reduction across the state. Furthermore, the widening racial generation gap is real as white people “account for about 63 percent of the nation’s population and between now and 2030, 15 million whites will leave the work force while 26 million non-whites will enter the work force nationwide.”

Will they be prepared to succeed in the work force? “By 2020, 65 percent of jobs in the U.S. will require at least some college training; 45 percent of jobs will require an associate degree or higher. But only 27 percent of U.S.-born blacks, 26 percent of U.S.-born Latinos and 23 percent of Native Americans have an associate degree or higher.” The disparity between races could become even more audible without focused attention of economic growth that focuses on workforce development for both blue-collar and middle-class jobs.
By improving the chances of each student earning a degree, the state can contribute many more graduates to the national economy at little additional expense even in these budget-constrained times. Broader adoption of evidence-based practices in teaching and degree programs plays a central role in the CSU's efforts. Engaged educational activity “the "high-impact practices" already in use in isolated pockets around the system” can attract and retain even the most at-risk populations, by highlighting the value and relevance of college learning. In fact, a 2010 study at CSU Northridge (Huber) found that when underrepresented minority (URM) students enrolled in two or more high-impact practices, they not only closed the achievement gap in terms of grade point averages and persistence, but actually surpassed their traditional peers.

Additionally, despite the growing need for STEM graduates to fuel our economy, the number of diverse students both competent and proficient in science and math is much lower than our national need. Nationwide, in 2006, Latinos were 19% of the college-aged population but only received 8% of STEM bachelor's degrees and 3.5% of master's degrees. Additionally, in 2009, African Americans received just 7% of all STEM bachelor's degrees, 4% of master's degrees and 2% of PhDs. Supporting the STEM pipeline is critical to the future success of our economy and worldwide competitiveness, as well as our efforts to address such global-societal issues as climate change, poverty, and the widening income gap.

Given this reality, during the next three years CCE will continue to implement its currently funded STEM initiatives while also focusing on innovative methods to attract, engage, and graduate a diverse pool of students. It is crucial that we prepare students to overcome California’s numerous social issues while meeting and adapting to the workforce needs of the 21st century.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE CSU TODAY

Currently, CCE allocates more than $1 million annually to CSU service learning and community engagement offices who partner with more than 3,200 community organizations. CCE organizes annual systemwide affinity meetings, webinars, and other professional development workshops for faculty, service-learning leaders, and community partners. CCE has a successful history of garnering and managing external grant funding ($5.7 million since 1998) to support and advance service-learning programs across the system.

The CSU’s 18-year commitment to engaging with our local and global communities in authentic, enduring, and mutually-beneficial partnerships is evident through programs such as service learning, a high-impact practice that combines classroom instruction with meaningful community service. Since 1998, more than two million CSU students have given back to their communities. The CSU has achieved institutional excellence and distinction as a system, and as individual campuses. These outstanding investments and innovations are made possible by the contributions of faculty, administrators, students, alumni and partners of the CSU. Fourteen CSUs are part of an elite group of 361 colleges and universities across the country that have received the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification. The Community Engagement Classification recognizes the deep engagement of institutions of higher education with local, regional, national, and global communities.

During the past five years the CSU has actively participated in statewide and national conversations connecting the CSU with national and state organizations around key issues in the field including student persistence and the development and expansion of high impact practices (HIPs) that boost student success.

- Since 2006, CCE has built a strong network supporting the development and expansion of community-based research across the state, and in recent years, partnered with national organizations such as the Council for Undergraduate Research to institutionalize undergraduate research and broaden community-based research opportunities across the CSU.
- In 2009, the CSU joined Access to Success, the consortium of state systems organized by the National Association of System Heads and funded by Education Trust to boost graduation rates and close achievement gaps. As a system, the CSU committed to raising its six-year graduation rates by eight percentage points to 56%,
and to cutting in half the difference in those rates between students of color and other students. The CSU exceeded its six-year graduation rate target; however, there was no change in our achievement gap.

- In 2010, in response to the national need for more STEM graduates, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented student groups including low-income, first generation, students of color, and women, CCE embarked on a system-wide effort to increase the use of service-learning pedagogy in STEM courses in order to increase student engagement and success. With Corporation for National and Community Service funding through Learn and Serve America, the CSU increased its service-learning course offerings in STEM by 86%, since 2008. A follow-up study of these efforts from Cobblestone Applied Evaluation, Inc. indicate that 245 new STEM SL courses were added in the CSU system as part of the Learn and Serve grant; campuses considered to have “sustained institutionalization” of SL in STEM doubled from four to eight over three years and faculty have continued many of the efforts started from professional development experiences.

- Since 2011, CCE and campus service-learning/community engagement offices have been given additional responsibilities beyond service learning to support other HIPs, including internships, and co-ops. Quality implementation requires partnership building and resources to further the execution, growth and management of risk for these additional HIPs. These additional responsibilities occurred during a period in which the CSU experienced severe budget cuts and staffing shortages.

Building on STEM-engaged efforts begun in 2010, the Center undertook two systemwide efforts during the 2014-15 academic year to advance STEM student success through the implementation of high impact practices.

- A three-year STEM service-learning research study (September 2014-November 2017) funded by the W.M. Keck Foundation is examining what impact STEM service-learning courses have on common measures of student academic achievement, career development and civic engagement. Designed to support up to 13 CSU campuses using the CalState S4 database, this initial study will inform best practices in service learning across the CSU and build an alumni base for long-term follow-up. It is our hope that this project will lay the foundation for the first national longitudinal study of common measures of student success in STEM service learning to commence in 2018. We anticipate that findings from this study will contribute to the development of assessment instruments that examine the impact of service learning across all disciplines.

- A three-year CSU STEM VISTA program (2015-2017) funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service utilizes AmeriCorps® VISTA members to mobilize university and community resources for underrepresented students to aspire to, excel in, and complete degrees in STEM. They involve students in real-world education like service learning, internships, summer bridge programs, first year experience programs, and undergraduate research.

Furthermore, as the CSU approaches the next ten-year phase of Access to Success with a continued focus on 1) enhancing and scaling high impact practices; 2) encouraging campuses to take a new approach to data, using preliminary real-time results to inform decision-making; and, 3) build on STEM-engaged efforts, CCE and campus service-learning/community engagement offices have a critical role to play. We must start with a renewed focus and commitment to service learning and community engagement through systemwide improvement of service-learning data and research that examines the impact of service learning on student learning, civic engagement and career preparation. Second, with nearly 20 years of systemwide coordination and leadership, CCE and campus offices are in a unique position to serve as models on how to effectively institutionalize and implement high impact practices.

**Engagement Across the CSU**

The 2014-15 academic year offered new and widespread, sustained service-learning and community engagement efforts with the CSU’s 3,200 partnerships.

- Nearly 66,000 students had the opportunity to participate in 3,055 service-learning courses across the system.
- Grants and awards received by campuses and the Chancellor’s Office for community engagement totaled $4 million, a return on investment of $4 for every dollar invested by the state for community engagement.
- 15 CSU campuses were named to the 2015 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll which recognizes higher education institutions for their commitment to and achievement in community service.

For the latest statistics on CSU campus visit: [http://www.calstate.edu/cce/annualreport/2015/](http://www.calstate.edu/cce/annualreport/2015/)
The CSU Center for Community Engagement is known for advancing the mission of the CSU System through effective programs, initiatives, services and expertise; however, it is also focused on supporting campuses in building and sustaining community-based authentic relationships. The center supports a systemwide network of center directors, faculty and staff enabling relationship-building and collaboration. With an eye for sustainability, the CCE continues to spearhead key initiatives such as strategic planning, risk management, and assessment; in an effort to give campuses the tools to envision and implement long-term strategies that fit their campus and community context.

VISION

In 2019, the California State University, Center for Community Engagement is spearheading higher education to develop and prepare leaders who are engaged and productive members of our global society, who make civic-minded decisions and contribute innovative solutions to address the complex social, health, economic, scientific, and civic issues of our time.

MISSION

The CSU Chancellor’s Office Center for Community Engagement advances the California State University’s systemwide and multi-campus commitment to serving the economic, public policy and social needs of our state. Through advocacy, innovation and leadership, the Center supports campus efforts that are rooted in the exchange and production of knowledge and resources in mutually beneficial partnerships with our local and global communities.

CORE VALUES

- Collaboration
- Reciprocity
- High-quality
- Effectiveness
- Sustainability
- Life-long Learning

KEY TERMS DEFINED

SERVICE LEARNING

A teaching method that promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are substantively related to course content. Through reflective activities, students enhance their understanding of course content, general knowledge, sense of civic responsibility, self-awareness and commitment to the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While there are several definitions for community engagement and each campus has the prerogative to develop a definition that represents the culture of its campus and regional community the CSU Chancellor’s Office is using, with a slight adaptation, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s definition.

Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange and production of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. Examples of community engagement activities include, but are not limited to:

- service-learning
- voter registration drives
- community-based research
- community-centered forums
- alternative spring breaks
- community service

With nearly 20 years of systemwide coordination and leadership, CCE and campus offices are in a unique position to serve as models on how to effectively institutionalize and implement high impact practices.
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND GOALS

To address the barriers and remain focused on the priorities, the Center for Community Engagement will focus on four complementary strategic directions from 2016 through 2019:

1. Build CSU-wide capacity to advance community engagement
   - Goal 1. Improve and utilize systemwide mechanisms to gather data on the impact of all forms of community engagement.
   - Goal 2. Design and implement high-quality, sustainable systemwide programs and initiatives.
   - Goal 3. Explore partnerships with other Chancellor's Office programs in an effort to expand engagement efforts.

2. Raise awareness and visibility for the importance of community engagement and its connection to CSU priorities
   - Goal 1. Create a marketing plan for promoting CE, the work of individual campuses, and the idea that community engagement is integral to the excellence of higher education.
   - Goal 2. Elevate campus service-learning leaders’ expertise with colleagues from other high impact experiential programs to share best practices for student learning and institutionalization.
   - Goal 3. Inform, recruit and promote VISTA to all stakeholders that demonstrates the impact of the VISTA projects on STEM student success, as well as its impact on the VISTA members’ personal and professional development.

3. Mobilize Partnerships to fuel and expand community engagement
   - Goal 1. Sustain partnerships that support CCE priorities.
   - Goal 2. Explore and experiment with new ways to support the CE/SL director network.

4. Strengthen the capacity of the Center for Community Engagement
   - Goal 1. Pilot new ways to manage administrative practices for maximum effectiveness.
   - Goal 2. Explore alternative staffing options and complete an overall staffing plan.
   - Goal 3. Develop a 5-year fundraising plan
   - Goal 4. Design a professional development plan for all staff.
   - Goal 5. CCE staff and key partners regularly reflect, review, and assess CCE’s strategic plan.

CONCLUSION

As the Center for Community Engagement implements these strategic directions and achieves the goals laid out in this plan, the organization will advance the mission of the California State University System. The Center recognizes this critical time for higher education, and will continue to work in partnership with each CSU campus, CO colleagues and partners to lead the charge in shaping a better future for all of California.
CITATIONS – Read more here:

- Climate -- http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/

