

WASC Working Group 2 CO-CURRICULAR STUDENT SUCCESS

Narrative assessment of SJSU's strengths and weaknesses related to co-curricular student success

STRENGTHS

Over the course of the past ten years, the Division of Student Affairs has undergone a significant transformation. In the midst of significant fiscal restrictions, employee reductions and other downsizing efforts, departments and staff continued to provide quality programs and services to our students. Approximately 200 programs, services and initiatives were implemented over this time period, ones that play a significant role in the success of our students. Additionally, students' engagement within the campus community has grown significantly, so much so that they have presented their own challenges.

Recruitment and pre-enrollment communication to prospective and entering students has grown significantly, including taking advantage of social media trends. While electronic sources of communication (websites) still need attention, print publications like the Frosh and Transfer 101 publications, as well as Steps to Enrollment for Graduate, Undergraduate Non-California Resident, and International Students publications fully outline what is needed to complete the enrollment process. These publications are clearly laid-out and visually represent all that the campus has to offer. These publications, as well as the more structural Spartan Pathways system, make entrance into SJSU more streamlined and easy to understand for incoming students and their family members.

Student services operations have grown to support more of the richness and diversity of SJSU's student body. Programs and services have expanded to include the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, as well as students with disabilities, first generation students, veterans, latino/a, and the Asian American and Pacific Islander populations. Additionally, mental and physical health services have grown significantly due to the implementation of the campus Mental Health Fee, providing a greater array of support to a more complex student body. These services take full advantage of technological (software and cloud-based technologies) advances in the field, and help to create a more safe and secure, yet ever present (24 hour) access for students. These programs and services include support groups for men, suicide prevention, and grief support, as well as workshops and educational tools for smoking cessation, stress management, nutrition, responsible alcohol consumption, body image, eating disorders, healthy relationships, safety, safer sexuality and more.

Persistence through graduation is aided not only by the Office of the Registrar's Graduation Workshops, but also through partnerships with the various Colleges and programs offered through the Career Center. These programs include internships and experiential education, mock interviews, the Target Student Leadership Etiquette Dinner, webinars, and resume workshops and reviews. As with mental and physical health, technology has been fully utilized so that students may have greater access to services.

The campus life areas are the easiest to codify, as student participation rates and growth trends are much easier to monitor and assess. Since 2005, new facilities have opened: the LGBT and Women's Resource Centers, as well as Campus Village (approximately 2,400 beds); departments moved to new locations: Student Involvement to Clark Hall and the Career Center to the Administration Building; and new buildings are currently under construction and due to be completed in 2014: Student Union and the Student Health Building. These new facilities and location changes better serve a more expansive student clientele. More students living on campus, and as well as more students in general necessitate new residential facilities, student union, cultural centers, and health facilities. Because engagement activities have increased, moves to larger facilities were prudent for Student Involvement and the Career Center.

Since 2005, the number of student organizations has more than doubled, from 176 to 415, with over 40% being academic or honorary organizations. Because of the high risk nature of participation, the Club Sports Council and University supervision was established in 2006. This area has seen significant growth since its inception. Spartan

Rec Connect was launched in 2007, and brings together Club Sports, Intramurals, and Recreation. Participation in all three areas has continued to increase over the past decade.

As with club sports, the fraternity and sorority communities have seen tremendous growth. In 2005, SJSU had 14 residential general interest fraternities and sororities, and a handful of recognized culturally-based fraternities and sororities. Total community membership totaled just under 900 students. Through 2014, the fraternity and sorority community has grown to include 45 fraternities and sororities (18 residential / 27 non-residential, 19 sororities / 26 fraternities, 20 general interest / 25 culturally-based) and a total membership of over 1,900 students. The most significant news in this area relates to academic standards. In 2005 the fraternity and sorority community earned a combined undergraduate GPA average of a 2.40, well below the undergraduate campus GPA average (2.75). In 2013, the community's combined undergraduate GPA average reached 2.87, it's highest yet, and just below the undergraduate campus GPA average of 2.93.

Residential occupancy grew from 82% to 100% capacity and beyond, with significant waiting lists. Programmatic and service offerings within the residential complex have only created more demand for beds. Because of the newly implemented Mandatory Frosh Housing requirement, and difficulty with exceeding capacity, the University is currently in the process of proposing to the Chancellor's Office the building of a new campus residence hall. Campus Village opened in 2005, and a mere 9 years later, demand continues. More and more, the sense of campus community has grown, and the "commuter campus" mantra is being transformed.

CHALLENGES (*weaknesses*)

With all of the positive change and robust growth within the campus community over the past ten years, it is important to also note the areas that provide the University and Division of Student Affairs with challenges. Unfortunately, the following challenges rise to the surface after synthesizing all of the reports and data provided by the Student Affairs departments.

The first challenge is in the area of Assessment. While 144 documents were submitted, and nearly every department has attempted to assess or collect data, consistency and accuracy is a problem. Few departments assessed and collected data for each fiscal year (10), and an even greater number of departments did not assess student learning based on concise and measurable learning outcomes. It is evident that an accurate understanding of learning outcomes and assessment hasn't existed with Division personnel. With a handful of Divisional leadership changes, as well as a shuffling of responsibilities within the Division, there hasn't been a consistent champion or resource for Division personnel.

This is all changing in 2013. With the adoption of University-wide learning outcomes, the Division leadership has fully embraced assessment and learning outcomes. In September, a well known expert in learning outcomes and assessment (Marilee Bresciani) was invited to campus to visit with Division personnel over a two day period. She met with the Student Affairs Leadership Team, several departments individually, provided consultation with individual staff members, and then provided a workshop for everyone who could attend. In addition, the Division brought Cheryl Allmen out of retirement to serve as the new part-time Assessment Coordinator. Cheryl will be a resource to Division assessment personnel to ensure consistency, as well as compliance with the Vice President's mandate of yearly assessment. Division leadership held a full-day training in early November for at least two staff members from each department, and included hands-on work with learning outcomes development, as well as assessment rubrics.

The second challenge comes to light when looking at enrollment trends, while also looking at program participation. While Latino/a, Asian American, and international student enrollment has increased, Native American and African American enrollment has declined significantly. Native American enrollment has declined by 59% (.16%) and African American enrollment has declined by 27% (3.4%). Unfortunately CSU impaction protocols and budget constraints have restricted recruitment efforts in this area. Because the vast majority of SJSU students come from our local service area, we will always be at a disadvantage regarding these two populations.

Compounding the enrollment data is campus support for both of these communities. Regardless of the political happenings as of late, it is evident in reading through the reports that University efforts are more geared towards the AAPI and latino/a communities. We are already an AAPI-serving institution, and are striving to become a Hispanic-serving institution. Additionally, because of the fiscal implications and advantages of increasing the number of international and non-resident students, African American and Native American students have been left behind. Even the LGBT communities have seen significant growth and support over the past six years. Programs and organizations like the UNICAS Group, El Llanto Cards, Vamos a Leer en MLK, Jr., Destino Universidad, AAPI Ambassadors, Alpha Kappa Omicron, Pi Alpha Phi, Sigma Pi Alpha, Lambda Theta Nu, Es El Momento, the AAPI Community Forum, the ALAS Conference, and more showcase University efforts in strengthening the AAPI and latino/a communities.

In the same timeframe, while African American student enrollment was declining, participation in African American student organizations was on an even greater descent. Participation in historically African American fraternities and sororities has declined by roughly 56% over the past eight years, more than double the rate of enrollment decline. Several organizations have been discontinued or were suspended. A glimmer of hope comes from the implementation of the African American Readiness College Project, the return of Alpha Kappa Alpha to campus after an 8 year hiatus, and the Hip Hop Student Conference.

The third and last area of challenge has to do with dispute resolution and student adjudication. The Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development has seen a 480% increase in academic integrity violations in the past twenty years, with a 25% increase since 2006. While the rate of increase is slowing, more cases are being reported. In reading through the reports, one would wonder if faculty have the resources to resolve classroom behavior issues, or if they feel no other option but to refer them to Student Conduct. Additionally, when looking at the complete picture of student conduct violations, the pattern becomes more disturbing. In 2005-06, the department heard 981 cases for the year (21% academic integrity). In 2012-13, the department heard 2,307 cases (11% academic integrity). This represents a 235% increase in the caseload for the department. More alarming is that more and more cases stem from poor behavior due to alcohol consumption, as well as physical violence.

The Office of the Ombudsperson shows trends that are equally as disturbing. While the number of cases referred to the Office of the Ombudsperson is relatively stable, averaging 340 per year, the number of cases referred to the Student Fairness Committee presents challenges. In 2005-06, the Student Fairness Committee heard 2 cases and resolved them in a matter of weeks. Over the next few years, the cases grew to 3, then 6 and then 10, with case duration extending beyond a semester, and even a year. 2011-12 saw 15 cases referred to Student Fairness, and 2012-13 saw a record 25 cases referred to the Committee. While the 1,250% increase in referrals is troubling, the number of cases unresolved and forwarded from fiscal year to fiscal year is alarming. Alone, from 2011-12 to 2012-13, 5 (33%) of the cases had to be forwarded, and from 2012-13 to 2013-14, 9 (36%) of the cases had to be forwarded. The reason for the inability to resolve the cases is due to lack of student participation (quorum) on the committee, as well as structure problems with the make-up of the committee and how cases must be investigated and heard.

Several remedies have been proposed in recent years, and heard at the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee, as well as Academic Senate as a whole, but no long-term solution has been found or implemented. What is most disturbing is that students involved in some of these cases were nearing their threshold times for prerequisite courses or even graduation, yet they were held in limbo and prevented from graduating or receiving their credentials.