

WASC Interim Report

Name of Institution: California State University, Monterey Bay

Person Submitting the Report: Julio R. Blanco, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs and ALO

Report Submission Date: February 27, 2014

Statement on Report Preparation

Briefly describe in narrative form the process of report preparation, providing the names and titles of those involved. Because of the focused nature of an Interim Report, the widespread and comprehensive involvement of all institutional constituencies is not normally required. Faculty, administrative staff, and others should be involved as appropriate to the topics being addressed in the preparation of the report. Campus constituencies, such as faculty leadership and, where appropriate, the governing board, should review the report before it is submitted to WASC, and such reviews should be indicated in this statement.

Planning and implementing the ongoing work of the campus began promptly after CSUMB received the Action Letter in July, 2011. The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, under its director, Becky Rosenberg, sponsored faculty led faculty co-ops on academic rigor and academic excellence, senior capstone, and assessment of critical thinking, while the Academic Senate formed a university-wide Assessment Committee. These efforts contributed significantly to key portions of this report—namely the development of an institution-wide Assessment Plan. Examples of data use in curricular decision making were selected for the Interim Report. Ilene Feinman, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences crafted sections about using data to improve academic programs while Becky Rosenberg contributed a section on program review and the campus tutoring center, the Academic Skills Achievement Program (ASAP). John Fitzgibbon, Associate Vice President for Finance, contributed sections related to the financial aspects of the report and provided relevant documentation. Analysis by Veronica Chukwuemeka, Director of the Office of Institutional Assessment and Research and visiting scholar Adolpho Santos added to the campus understanding of retention, graduation rates, and efforts to enhance student success. Through consultation and the vetting process, senior faculty and administrators in the University that are closely related to the ongoing work on each issue contributed to each section. Mary Boyce, former Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness, Kathy Cruz-Uribe, former Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, David A. Reichard, Acting Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness, and Julio Blanco, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs developed the interim report itself, supported by staff members in the Office of the Provost. The draft report was vetted with the Deans, the Academic Senate Executive Committee, and the senior leadership team of the University. President Eduardo Ochoa formally approved the report before it was submitted to WASC. A copy of this report has also been shared with the CSU Office of the Chancellor. (See

attached Progress, Timeline and Action Steps on Key Issues of Concern: 2011-Present Table for a short summary of what is detailed in this report).

List of Topics Addressed in this Report

Please list the topics identified in the action letter(s) and that are addressed in this report.

For this Interim Report, the Commission asked the University to address five areas for further attention and development:

1. progress in data collection, analysis, and use;
2. improving retention and graduation rates and assessing the various initiatives to support students' completion;
3. continuing improvements to assessment processes and program review;
4. defining academic rigor; and
5. addressing the financial challenges arising from the state budget crisis (2011, Action Letter, p. 3).

This report is organized according to these five areas, each of which is addressed separately. The Commission also urged CSUMB to continue its comparative study of senior capstone models on campus and this report also provides an update on progress made on this project.

Institutional Context

Very briefly describe the institution's background; mission; history, including the founding date and year first accredited; geographic locations; and other pertinent information so that the Interim Report Committee can understand the issues discussed in the report in context.

Founded in 1994 on 1500 acres of the former Fort Ord as the 21st university in the California State University, CSU Monterey Bay (CSUMB) has a [Vision Statement](#), a [Mission Statement](#), and a set of [core academic values](#) that attract students, faculty, and staff. These commitments orient the University to serving the under-served and diverse students of California with active and project-based learning, innovative pedagogies, and often, in community settings. Embracing its Vision, the University is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with 34% of the current student body identifying as Latino/a, 56 percent of its students identifying themselves as first-generation college students and 41 percent as under-represented minorities as of spring 2013. The University was first accredited in June, 2003. Still small by CSU standards, CSUMB now has 5600 students, mostly traditional age, residential students in undergraduate programs. The University has 23 undergraduate degree programs and 8 graduate programs.

Since the completion of the Educational Effectiveness Review and the Action Letter of 2011, the University has experienced changes in leadership. President Dianne Harrison went to CSU Northridge and our new President, Dr. Eduardo Ochoa, who arrived on an interim basis in summer 2012, was appointed by the CSU Board of Trustees permanently in May 2013. Provost Kathryn Cruz-Urbe departed in summer 2013 after six years at the University, and Julio R. Blanco arrived in July 2013 as Interim Provost. The rest of the senior leadership team has remained stable. President Ochoa came to CSUMB after serving for two years in the Obama

administration as Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, overseeing most Federal higher education programs, including the recognition process for the higher education accreditation system. With the benefit of his national experience, President Ochoa is giving new focus to the University's strategic plan, including a [2013 refresh of that plan](#), and CSUMB continues its development as a strong, small, public university with a significant role to play in the region. (See attached Organization Charts for more detail about changes since 2011).

In this period, the University has continued to do its work, building capacity to support its steady growth. Each of the colleges now has a Faculty Associate, selected by the Deans from among the full-time faculty, who now support work in assessment and programmatic issues within each college; the Academic Senate adopted a definition of academic rigor which is practiced; the campus implemented a new model of General Education (GE) beginning in fall 2012; there is now an institutional assessment plan being implemented for the campus as a whole; and the WASC Substantive and Off-Campus Change Committee approved online versions of our degrees in Instructional Science and Technology (MS), Management and Information Technology (MS), and a bachelor's degree completion program in Computer Science and Information Technology (BS). In addition, [Cal State Online](#), a system wide online initiative, launched the Instructional Science and Technology graduate program in fall 2013 and Management and Information Technology graduate program in winter 2014. The degree completion program in Computer Science and Technology is slated to begin in fall 2014. CSUMB is now home to [CSU Summer Arts](#), which has provided new learning opportunities for students from across the CSU as well as members of the local community. A new Computer Science program ([CST in 3](#)), a partnership with Hartnell College which will allow students to earn a bachelor's degree in computer science and information technology in 3 years, started in fall 2013 and has garnered regional, state, and national recognition. And, the campus looks forward to the construction of a new academic building to house the College of Business and the School of Information Technology, creating more capacity to meet growing enrollment demand. Throughout, CSUMB is poised to retain and expand its focus on innovative methods of teaching and learning, to continue to lead in areas like service learning and community engagement, and to serve local community needs. And, across campus, CSUMB has developed and implemented improvements to measure and assess the effectiveness of its programs.

Response to Issues Identified by the Commission

This main section of the report should address the issues identified by the Commission in its action letter(s) as topics for the Interim Report. Each topic identified in the Commission's action letter should be addressed. The team report may provide additional context and background for the institution's understanding of issues.

Provide a full description of each issue, the actions taken by the institution that address this issue, and an analysis of the effectiveness of these actions to date. Have the actions taken been successful in resolving the problem? What is the evidence supporting progress? What further problems or issues remain? How will these concerns be addressed, by whom, and under what timetable? How will the institution know when the issue has been fully addressed? Please include a timeline that outlines planned additional steps with milestones and expected outcomes.

The Action Letter acknowledged the work that the University accomplished commending the campus for “the dynamism, adaptation and planning that had taken place during this comprehensive review” and for progress made in student retention and in aligning “resources with strategic goals and priorities, even in a challenging economic environment” (2011, Action Letter, p. 1). Endorsing the commendation and recommendations of the Educational Effectiveness review team, the Commission requested this Interim Report in 2014 and scheduled a comprehensive visit for 2019. For this interim report, the Commission requested that the campus address five particular areas:

- progress in data collection, analysis, and use
- improving retention and graduation rates and assessing the various initiatives to support students’ completion
- continuing improvements to assessment processes and program review
- defining academic rigor and
- addressing the financial challenges arising from the state budget crisis

This report describes specific progress made in each of these areas and provides examples and evidence to support our assessment of that progress.

1. Progress on Data Collection, Analysis, and Use

In its Action Letter, the Commission recognized CSUMB’s “increasing commitment to data-driven decision making” and encouraged the campus to “use the direct evidence of student learning and multiple measures of learning to inform decisions about academic offerings,” as well as to continue our alignment of assessment and decisions as part of program review and continuous improvement (2011, Action Letter, p.2). Over the last few years, CSUMB has increased its commitment to doing just that—increasing our capacity to collect, analyze, and use data to improve programs and continuing to incorporate and systematize such data analysis into our program review processes.

To achieve this goal, some structural changes have been made in how the campus collects, analyzes, and uses multiple kinds of data. One important change was reclassifying a staff position in the office of Institutional Assessment and Research (IAR) to a higher level. As a result, IAR now has a Director and two well trained staff members who can execute various projects more efficiently, develop more effective research instruments, and analyze findings more comprehensively in order to support recommendations in curriculum development, program review, assessment, and other areas. Enhancing these staff capacities ensures that CSUMB can continue to collect data on an ongoing basis for evaluation of educational effectiveness and planning purposes. For example, IAR has been able to continue administering the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) annually to 100 freshmen in the fall and 100 “native” seniors in the spring as part of the CSU’s commitment to participate in the CLA and for [reporting](#) the results to the public as part of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). Because the cross-sectional methodology of the CLA compares freshmen scores and senior

scores as a way to represent development in critical thinking and writing skills over time, findings from the CLA enhance the ability of the campus to assess student learning in such core competencies as critical thinking at the institutional level, an integral part of the campus comprehensive assessment plan.

While the CLA has been useful to CSUMB for the big picture for how students are doing in the development of essential skills like critical thinking, it is limited in its ability to look carefully at curriculum over time to ensure the ongoing quality of academic program offerings. That project is better suited to assessment work within the majors and in general education. One of the best developed ways that such assessment happens at CSUMB is Academic Program Review, a multi-year and iterative process that includes self-studies, external reviews, and program improvement plans every seven years supported by evidence of student learning collected and analyzed through annual assessment projects in the majors. Importantly, the campus has made good progress in collecting, analyzing, and implementing changes to curriculum and program design as a result of this work. Moreover, the program review process has also become one vehicle for programs to contribute to campus-wide strategic goals and priorities.

CSUMB has formal program review processes for academic programs (Academic Program Review) as well as for administrative service areas (Administrative Services Review). The campus uses the data gleaned through these reviews to make meaningful program improvement decisions. Three specific examples (two academic programs and one academic service area) illustrate how these processes are informing program evaluation and improvement: Academic Program Reviews and Program Improvement Plans in Visual and Public Art (VPA) and the Division of Social, Behavioral and Global Studies (SBGS) and an Academic and Administrative Services Review conducted in the Academic Skills and Achievement Program (ASAP). These two academic programs and one service review demonstrate how programs are collecting and using data gathered from multiple sources in their self-studies, responding to suggestions from external reviewers, developing program improvement plans, and creating assessment projects in the wake of program review to continue the work, closing the feedback loop in the process. The examples provided in this report unfolded across several years and demonstrate how data are being collected, analyzed, and used in academic decision-making. (See also attached Program Review Manual for 2013)

Visual and Public Art Degree Program Review

The Visual and Public Art (VPA) BA degree integrates theory and studio courses committed to the fields of public and community arts, art education, and museum studies. The degree program has been operational since the founding of the campus. The VPA degree program underwent Program Review in academic year 2008-09, which included conducting a self-study requiring examination of assessment of student work completed prior to program review, inviting external reviewers to campus, and using what was learned in the self-study and the reviewers' feedback as grist for a program improvement plan. Subsequent assessment projects have provided mechanisms to understand how changes made to the curriculum have been working, laying the groundwork for the department's next program review cycle. This narrative

describes what the faculty learned in this process and how the department is using the data and feedback to make and assess program improvement decisions.

VPA developed an effective self-study following the guidance of the Program Review Procedure Manual, utilizing the Institutional Assessment and Research data and direct evidence of student learning, especially culled from students' senior capstone projects and a review of the related VPA curricular frameworks. The self-study included the standard evaluation of the curriculum as a whole, and a revisiting of the governance structure. This second evaluation was prompted by a change of the leadership structure. The original chair was hired into the position, and the current structure conforms to the CSU practice of rotating chairs at several year intervals. This shift necessitated a rethinking of how the leadership operated and the roles of chair and faculty in decision-making processes. They engaged with external reviewers to gain feedback from experts outside the campus to further evaluate their practices and materials, and then underwent an additional review by a campus review committee.

As per the protocol, once the self-study and external review were complete, VPA faculty began a secondary process of inquiry resulting in the program improvement plan (PIP). To achieve this secondary level of evaluation the faculty prior to, during, and after the formal review, engaged in several retreats to identify areas of interest and to meet the challenge of addressing, as they frame it, "the opportunity to reexamine our founding vision as well as take into account the profound economic changes occurring in the context of the CSU system. The ongoing assessment process VPA has set for the department, as well as the focused self-study, has yielded data and insight that have led us to plan effectively for the futures of our program. In a period of transitional leadership these reflections and questions have set the stage for our Program Improvement planning"(VPA Self Study 2009).

VPA collated the strengths and challenges identified by the self-study and the strengths and challenges identified by the external reviewers and compared the lists to determine consistency. Along with the shared perspectives from the external reviewers, the external reviewers also noted a series of challenges related to the governing structure, number of faculty lines, variety in course offerings, and potential sources of development such as larger lower division general education courses to support smaller upper division studio classes.

To analyze the data, the faculty undertook a study of the reviews and held a retreat to identify potential fields of action. They itemized these potential actions for the program and then ranked them by priority and by projected timeline to completion. This study was used to identify the findings in their program improvement plan. "After the identification of priorities, the faculty set up leadership teams and timelines for research and implementation to address the feedback from reviewers, as well as the needs and goals articulated by the VPA core faculty members" (PIP 2010).

Through this process VPA faculty learned that their top priorities were to search a vacant faculty line, clarify their advising system and its guiding documents, and revisit the structure of their concentrations to create more clarity and cohesion. This process was generative of a long list of priorities in terms of infrastructure, campus relations, and curricular development and

refinement. VPA created Program Development Task Timelines, which articulated the priorities into the next two academic years and enabled a system of planning and accountability through identification of each action item and its point person. This model was built through a collaborative and problem solving process, emphasizing practicalities such as timelines and an insistence on shared leadership and mutual ownership of the curriculum by the VPA community.

The linkage between public art accessibility and visibility on campus and the recruitment efforts of the Visual and Public Art degree program were neither lost on the faculty nor the external reviewers. A process has now been put in place to vet student art presentations in a manner consistent with campus protocols and with the professional world of art for which the students are being trained. In addition, a student public art policy went into effect in spring 2011 to create a set of protocols, guidelines, and processes for the exhibition of student-made art. These modifications to campus practice and policy will provide potential new venues for display and appreciation of public art on campus and of the arts program itself.

A number of new initiatives for student success were put in place or are still in the planning stages relative to the feedback from student surveys and the program review process as a whole. These initiatives include: Open Studio hours, Fridays, 10-4; reinforced rigor in studio courses; improved gallery protocols (showing more student work at the small VPA gallery, involving students as curators); developing W.H.A.A.T. (Working Hard As Artists Together)—student art club; initiating student redesign of lobby experience (welcome materials, bench, chairs, blackboard); increased field trips to contemporary galleries and artists' studios; workshops with all visiting artists; and as a corollary to developing curricular flexibility at the upper division, the design and implementation of a new lower division art history survey course.

In terms of the curriculum as a whole, the VPA faculty undertook the sun-setting of concentrations, the development of advising pathways, and a planned two year rotation of classes, along with an equitable redistribution of teaching assignments. In addition, the VPA faculty undertook a re-examination of required courses resulting in the elimination of *Community Research*; the addition of a studio course requirement: *Mixed Media*; and a choice between the courses *Digital Public Art* or *Museum Studies*.

As a result of the program review process, the Visual and Public Art department made additional changes. For instance, the agreement that there needed to be immediate action on a search for the Integrated Media and Photography faculty line was met by launching a search, which was completed in spring 2012. The observation that the major would benefit from a clearer articulation of advising guides to curricular pathways was met by developing such materials. The observation that the major would benefit from development of a larger lower division art history course to bring FTE and support smaller studio classes was met by launching a new lower division course. Additional changes initiated since program review and ongoing include eliminating concentrations, removing some less than effective courses (based on feedback from the review), and adding other courses (e.g., a studio course requirement).

Moreover, VPA has also used the annual assessment projects completed in the wake of their program improvement plan to understand and measure the impact of some of these changes. Supported by the college's Faculty Associate, VPA has used annual assessment projects to address particularly critical curricular areas made visible by the program review process. For example, in 2011-12, the department decided to address what they suspected was an increasing lack of basic art skills for incoming students. To address faculty perception that students were not as prepared in basic skills for the level of rigor expected in the VPA major, the faculty developed a rubric to identify what those basic skills should look like for students entering major course work and used that rubric to assess those expected basic skills. They gathered and reviewed random samples of student work from an Introduction to Drawing course, engaged in a shared faculty "crit" and used the basic skills rubric to support their collective assessment. Determining a need to encourage more rigor in these basic courses as a result of this assessment, they committed to visit each other's classes, revise assignments in the courses to enhance rigor, introduce a portfolio process to document how students' basic skills develop over time, and work on a shared arts lexicon to help students develop a language of criticism as working artists. These curricular and pedagogical changes can be assessed in future annual assessment projects before the next program review cycle.

As the VPA example illustrates, the program review process—which includes significant review of prior assessment findings as part of the self-study, a visit from external reviewers, and the development of an improvement plan—has led to more intentional planning and implementation for the curriculum, follow-up assessment projects, and changes to curriculum design that will become an important focus for the next program review cycle, ensuring an essential feedback loop.

Division of Social, Behavioral, and Global Studies: Degree Programs in Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Global Studies Program Reviews

The Social, Behavioral, and Global Studies (SBGS) Division houses three distinct majors: Social and Behavioral Science (SBS), Global Studies (GS), and Psychology (PSY). The three majors in the division provide an integrative approach to the fields of anthropology, history, economics, political science, international law, international studies, archaeology, geography/geographic information systems (GIS), religious study, and as a separate major field, Psychology. The Division also offers three minors: Global Studies, Psychology, and Peace Studies, which is built in collaboration with Humanities and Communication (HCOM). Two of the three majors—SBS and GS—underwent the program review process in 2007 and 2008. While the program reviews for SBS and GS occurred independently, the process revealed significant interconnection between the majors, leading faculty to begin working more closely together in SBS and GS to share resources, curriculum, and planning processes.

The contribution of external reviewers to these observations was critical for SBS and GS faculty to begin exploring these interconnections more intentionally and strategically than they had in the past. The most important take-away message from external reviews for both majors was the recognition that since both GS and SBS were essentially social science programs with social science faculty, the two programs should find ways to integrate their curricula, especially

allowing students to take courses in each program to fulfill requirements in the other. In order for this to happen, external reviewers believed that GS needed to greatly simplify its Major Learning Outcome (MLO) structure, and SBS needed to clarify its MLOs.

To explore these possibilities, the SBGS Division produced three program improvement plans: one for SBS, one for GS, and one combined for both SBS and GS. SBGS faculty engaged each other through a series of meetings, producing a document of five common core principles and developing a series of analyses, quantitative and qualitative, by which to assess the efficacy of each degree and determine the appropriate points of intersection. Much of the analysis from which they built the program improvement plans, for each and for joint work, was developed in conversation with the external reviewers' report. SBGS presented five guiding principles to the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) who accepted them in November, 2009:

- General commitment to collaboration between the two majors in carrying out five-year improvement plans for each.
- Commitment to maintain the distinctiveness of each program with full budgetary support for each program. Faculty in both majors made it a condition of their participation in this process that the Dean agrees with the principle that collaboration would not result in budget reductions for any program within the division.
- Clarification of governance structures, with emphasis on establishing ways to balance division-wide collaboration with the desire of faculty within each major to make substantive curricular decisions.
- Commitment to interdisciplinarity. There was a feeling that as they moved to integrate some aspects of the GS and SBS curricula, faculty should engage in a careful examination of the meaning of interdisciplinarity, particularly in relation to any future shared curriculum.
- Commitment to improve clarity and functionality of curricula in both majors, including careful consideration of reducing overlap or redundancy between GS and SBS course offerings, and addressing the need for better matches between course offerings and faculty expertise.

Guided by these principles, faculty from both Global Studies and Social and Behavioral Sciences created five-year program improvement plans for each major. With AY 2013-14, GS and SBS begin the fifth year of these plans. To gauge progress toward the goals outlined in each plan, annual assessment projects have been central; each major has now conducted yearly assessment projects evaluating student learning at various points in the respective majors, including in their major proseminars (the gateway to the majors) and senior capstones. SBS has also assessed student learning in its quantitative research methods course. These projects have included the direct assessment of student learning as a window into some of the crucial questions raised in program review—especially how the SBS and GS majors might collaborate on their curricula and reduce redundancy.

One good example of SBS and GS faculty using program review and assessment to inform curricular decisions is the revamping of their respective major proseminar courses. In fall 2012, the SBGS division offered proseminar as a team-taught, cross-listed course in social and globalization theory to serve both SBS and GS majors. This course has two separate co-requisite assessment labs designed specifically for students in each of the respective majors. For SBS, the choice to focus more intentionally on social theory in the major proseminar was guided by the results of their 2010-11 annual assessment projects. The assessment examined student learning in capstone in relation to their understanding of and ability to apply social theory. For GS, the determination that students would benefit from a shared major proseminar designed to enhance the rigor of their introduction to social theory was also informed by their 2012-13 annual assessment project. Surveys and direct examination of student work documented that students were not as prepared as expected for the kind of theoretical work required in a GS senior capstone project. Thus, the decision to share resources by combining GS and SBS proseminars was informed both by program review and subsequent assessment findings.

A second example of using program review and assessment of student learning to reconsider curricula is the GS capstone course. As a result of what they learned in program review, GS revised its capstone curriculum from a single one-semester four unit seminar to two two-unit seminars offered in consecutive semesters. In order to improve the quality of research capstones, GS added a research methods requirement to its curriculum, and will be relying on SBS research methods courses for this requirement, again in part the result of program review determinations that both programs explore ways to share resources. Additionally, GS faculty used the annual assessment project after program review to refine their understanding of the impact of the GS curriculum on students entering the capstone course. Before it rolled out the new two semester capstone sequence, GS faculty examined student work in the then one semester GS capstone course as part of their 2011-12 assessment projects. Work samples examined included capstone topic proposals, e-portfolios prepared by students in the course (including an MLO essay prepared in the course and an accompanying sample of work from the major tied to a particular MLO) and a reflective self-assessment essay. Systematically reviewing these materials, faculty discovered students were not as prepared to apply theoretical frameworks in their final capstone papers as they had hoped would be the case by the end of students' time in the major. The reconceptualization of the GS major which followed—an enhanced major proseminar with the SBS major, for example—was the result of what faculty learned from program review and subsequent annual assessment projects, a process of refining fueled by close attention to student learning.

Additionally, program review and assessment work provided opportunity for both SBS and GS to reconsider their respective MLO structures. SBS revamped both its MLO I (Social Theory) and MLO II (Research Methods). For MLO I, it added a two-unit advanced social theory course in addition to the major proseminar. For MLO II, SBS expanded its research methods requirement from one course to two. GS greatly simplified its MLO structure, reducing the number of MLOs from 11 to 4, establishing a basic set of required core courses under MLO I to introduce students to the broad field of Global Studies, and placing greater emphasis on international

experience through a revamping of MLO III. The revised curriculum provides greater flexibility for students as a way to make study abroad for a semester or a year a more practical option without extending time to graduation for GS majors. Moreover, the simplification of the GS MLO structure now allows for more intentional overlap with SBS where appropriate, allowing students from both majors greater flexibility in course offerings in select MLOs and in electives.

Finally, both majors have moved toward electronic portfolios in order for students to document their progress through their respective majors. Those portfolios also have the added advantage of creating an easily accessible archive of student work for assessment purposes. The SBS major, which has from the beginning of the major's history utilized a portfolio assessment system that guides students through the major from major proseminar to capstone and graduation, has now completely converted to an e-portfolio system facilitating the collection of student work for assessment purposes. GS faculty studied the SBS e-portfolio system and in fall 2012 further developed the model in Google Sites for incoming juniors in the major. GS is now transitioning to a Word Press template for the e-portfolio. This allows them to incorporate students' lower division GE work, give the students more flexibility to design their own portfolios, link to iLearn (the CSUMB learning management system), and finally to make it portable so that students may take it with them when they graduate. The e-portfolio systems for both SBS and GS have allowed faculty and students to look at the overall curriculum in a new light, facilitating new ways of thinking about both majors. They are able simultaneously to see the whole and the parts of each major in each completed student e-portfolio, and to gain a clearer image of how effectively the parts work together toward completion of the whole by each student. Students respond to and reflect on each of the MLOs within their e-portfolios, both as they first encounter each MLO, and as they complete their MLOs synthetically in the production of their final capstones. Faculty in both majors are finding their conversations about student learning significantly enriched by the e-portfolio systems each major has adopted, and are now approaching the assessment work through the framework of the e-portfolios.

A good example of how e-portfolios are enhancing assessment of student learning is the 2012-13 SBS assessment project which focused on MLO 3 (Area of Specialization). SBS faculty drew randomly selected student work samples from the e-portfolios generated in senior capstone, reviewing not only work produced by students in prior courses to understand the depth of their content knowledge in an area of specialization, but also integrative narratives written by students synthesizing and reflecting on prior work for this MLO as part of the capstone process. After reviewing a small subset of the essays, SBS faculty developed a rubric which guided their assessment of further student work samples drawn from e-portfolios. Having such a rich collection of student work to draw from for assessment purposes through e-portfolios has significantly enhanced the ability of faculty to access, share, code, and analyze authentic evidence of student learning more directly and efficiently.

As the experience of SBS and GS suggest, faculty in each major are proceeding systematically to assess student learning in ways enhanced by the program review process. As they do so, collecting student work through an e-portfolio will enable them to include in their assessments some reflection on how students make connections among the MLOs, or, as the case may be, use them as developmental stepping stones. This was not an assessment element that faculty

had discussed before they began to review the first cohorts of students completing the SBS major exclusively within the e-portfolio framework. This kind of discovery highlights the ways that a reiterative process of assessment yields productive insights and new pathways for analyzing curricular efficacy.

Academic Skills Achievement Center

The Academic Skills Achievement Program (ASAP) assists students in five broadly defined subject areas: writing, mathematics, science, technology, and world languages. Tutors meet a variety of learning needs at all ability levels, working with students to expand their knowledge and abilities by empowering them to become independent learners. ASAP tutors, staff, and coordinators work together to design and offer effective, collaborative, and active learning experiences. In addition, ASAP provides tutors with the opportunity to develop teaching, leadership, and communication skills. ASAP conducted its self-study and external review during 2011-12 and received its recommendations from the campus review committee in fall 2012.

In conducting its self-study, ASAP examined several kinds of data, tracking student use of and progress with ASAP support and other sources. Some of the data collected and consulted for the self-study included:

- tracking information about how many students were served in each of the tutoring areas (language, math, science, technology, and writing) which demonstrated usage trend over time
- the number and kind of workshops offered by ASAP for students
- budgets for support staff, tutors, operating expenses, and sources of funding
- faculty survey designed to educate and solicit input about what worked and what needed improvement
- student satisfaction survey
- lists and kinds of courses supported through ASAP services

Looking closely at this and other qualitative data, ASAP identified several critical areas for further attention over the next several years. In addition to securing additional resources to carry out its mission, ASAP identified the need to enhance services for ESL/multilingual students, articulate student learning outcomes and develop an assessment strategy, expand marketing efforts to bring more students into ASAP, and continue to enhance its tutor training program.

After an external campus reviewer and campus committee provided feedback, ASAP crafted a program improvement plan identifying several key areas for improvement, all informed by the data they collected and analyzed through their self-study. As of fall 2013, most have now been implemented. A few examples are illustrated below.

Most pressing was the absence of learning outcomes for both our tutors and tutees. The ASAP coordinators, director, and support staff worked together to articulate two sets of outcomes, which are now published on the ASAP website and embedded in tutor training. The tutee

outcomes are posted in ASAP and on an informational handout widely distributed to students and faculty. The process of developing them and sharing them with tutors was very valuable and has helped ASAP focus training activities and tie all tutor training and subject specific training more clearly and coherently.

Tutee learning outcomes—ASAP tutees will:

1. demonstrate willingness to embrace new learning strategies.
2. apply study and learning skills modeled and taught through peer tutoring to increase their ability to learn independently.
3. utilize collaborative and independent learning opportunities to increase understanding of course subject matter.
4. develop as independent and self-directed learners.

Tutor learning outcomes--ASAP tutors will:

1. reflect on their tutoring practice and formulate goals for personal learning and development.
2. convey information in a variety of contexts and communicate effectively and responsibly with a number of audiences, including students, faculty, and staff.
3. enhance their professionalism regarding planning and problem solving; interaction with students, faculty and staff; timelines of assignments; and appearance/dress.
4. facilitate self-directed learning approaches with individuals and groups in a variety of modalities.
5. develop interpersonal skills, including empathy and cultural sensitivity.

In spring 2013, ASAP used these outcomes to revise their tutee survey and to guide reflection activities tutors completed. They are now working with the responses to formulate training plans for 2013-14. Because ASAP doesn't have access to students' completed work, they are not able to conduct direct assessment and will continue to use student surveys to gauge progress on the tutor and tutee learning outcomes. In addition, ASAP is working with IAR to determine whether ASAP is having any impact on academic progress. For 2013-14, they are collecting data on three courses, Chem 109, Chem 110, and Bio 240. They chose those courses because science is the largest ASAP area in terms of numbers of tutors and tutees and they have been working particularly closely with faculty teaching these three courses, and have had tutors in some lab sessions of these classes. Hence they are particularly interested in determining whether they are having an impact. The initial study will match each of the students in these courses who use ASAP with students in the same courses who don't use ASAP, using comparable GPA ranges to create the control groups. They will draw demographic data as well. The goal is to compare course outcomes for students who use ASAP and those who don't. Moreover, ASAP coordinators also conduct periodic reviews of tutors through observations, tutor reflections, as a means to conduct annual assessments of progress on tutor learning outcomes.

Regarding resources, the program review allowed ASAP to identify the need for more space. In spring 2013, they benefited from some shifting around in the library and were able to capture 30 square feet of space, which enables an increase in seating capacity by 30. They also identified a need to increase the hours of math and science coordinators, both of whom were funded for 10 hours per week. Because the math coordinator already provides tutor training in a two unit course in the math department, ASAP determined that the priority was to increase the science coordinator's time and they received central funding to increase that position to 20 hours per week beginning fall 2013.

In response to a campus review committee recommendation that ASAP identify a group of faculty advocates to help communicate ASAP's program in ways that allay the stigma often associated (by both faculty and students) with tutoring, ASAP has created an advisory committee that began meeting in fall 2013. The committee includes not only faculty from all campus colleges who have demonstrated their understanding and advocacy of ASAP, but also staff from other student support areas. The invitation to participants described the purpose of the committee as follows:

As the campus review group recommended, this committee will be comprised of advocates and champions who can help students, faculty and staff appreciate the value of ASAP's services and encourage its use. This includes de-stigmatizing ASAP, which is often viewed as a "remedial" service for students with "deficits." This representation conflicts with our conception of ASAP as a collaborative learning resource that can benefit all students, including those struggling academically. In addition, the advisory committee can help us address challenges regarding resource allocation as the student body grows and our curriculum changes.

As we envision it, the committee will meet not more than twice a semester and we will not make significant requests of committee members outside of those meetings—beyond speaking on our behalf when opportunities present themselves and bringing back to us what you hear from colleagues and students about ASAP.

As this example of an academic services program review illustrates, the process provided ASAP with an opportunity to document and assess the effectiveness not only of their services (the kind, quality, and direction) but also the capacity to offer those services. Informed by the data they collected through a self-study and a report from an external reviewer and campus committee, ASAP implemented changes to its operations on campus. With the next round of program review, ASAP will assess the effectiveness of these changes, closing the feedback loop.

2. Improving Retention and Graduation Rates and Assessing Student Success Initiatives

The Commission's Action Letter recognized that CSUMB had improved retention and graduation rates and suggested that student success initiatives may have contributed to those improvements. The Commission, however, urged the campus to evaluate "which approaches

are working and which are not so that refinements can be made and resources allocated to the most effective approaches” (2011, Action Letter, p. 2). The campus has made improvements in how it evaluates these approaches, including retention and graduation rates as well as student success initiatives. This section updates the Commission on that progress.

In October of 2009, the California State University Board of Trustees announced the launch of a long-term, system-wide initiative to increase retention and graduation rates. The initiative is focused on increasing graduation rates as well as cutting in half the achievement gap in degree attainment for underrepresented students. At the time, the CSU system’s overall 6-year graduation rate for first time freshmen (FTF) was about 46 percent, and the announced goal of the graduation initiative is to increase this by eight percentage points by 2015 (to 54%, the top quartile of national averages of similar institutions).

The CSU worked with The Education Trust (Ed Trust) on the analytical work to set the overall goal for the system as well as individual goals for each campus that will lead to achievement of the system goal. The main populations of interest are the first-time freshmen and underrepresented minorities (URMs; defined as African-American, Hispanic, and Native American). Ed Trust developed a national peer grouping for each CSU campus, analyzed the peer groups’ retention and graduation rates, and determined the top quartile for each. As might be expected with such a large and diverse university system, campuses vary widely in their graduation rates. Some CSU campuses were already near the top of their peer group in terms of graduation rate; these campuses also made a commitment to increase graduation rate(s) by an additional six percentage points by 2015.

The initiative to improve graduation rates resonated strongly with CSUMB, as the campus was already addressing retention issues. Based on the Ed Trust analysis, CSU Monterey Bay was given a goal to improve its six year FTF graduation rate from 35.6% (for the cohort that started in 2000) to 49.3%, by 2015 (cohort starting in 2009). This represents a 14 percentage point increase in graduation rate for this population (the second highest increase identified among the 22 CSU campuses included in the study). While ambitious, the campus is committed to make progress toward this goal.

As a starting point, it is critical to recognize certain aspects about the CSUMB admissions landscape. Unlike some of its sister California State University campuses, and despite increasing numbers of applicants, CSUMB has remained committed to retain access for all qualified students and has not declared “impaction.” The office of Student Academic Support for the California State University system describes impaction this way: “An undergraduate major or campus is designated as impacted when the number of applications received from fully qualified applicants during the initial filing period exceeds the number of available spaces. Such majors or campuses are authorized to use supplementary admission criteria to screen applications” ([Office of Student Academic Support](#), 2013). As a result of not declaring impaction, CSUMB maintains admissions standards to those set by the CSU generally. Applicants must graduate from high school, have at least a 2.0 GPA, complete high school subject distribution requirements in areas “A-G” with grades of “C” or better, complete the SAT I or ACT, and pass placement exams in writing and math.

There has been a relatively consistent admissions profile of incoming students. SAT scores for incoming first time freshmen (FTF) have been consistent, declining slightly, while GPA's for incoming students have been on the rise. There continue to be students who require some form of remediation, though the percentages of students who do are improving. Several factors explain this shift. In response to a study by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the CSU lowered the score on the English Placement Test (EPT) that students needed to enter college level writing. An Early Assessment Program in California public high schools also provided needed information about which students require preparation for college level writing, leading to new efforts to enhance readiness for college level writing. At CSUMB, a Math Boot Camp gives incoming students the opportunity to complete remediation before they start their first semester. All of these efforts help explain the decline in the number of students requiring remediation.

Average SAT Scores, GPA, and Remediation Rates for FTF 2008-2012

Cohort	Average Verbal SAT	Average Math SAT	High School GPA	% Requiring Remediation in Math	% Requiring Remediation in English
Fall 2008	495	495	3.09	51%	49%
Fall 2009	492	490	3.11	48%	52%
Fall 2010	482	481	3.19	52%	56%
Fall 2011	486	489	3.18	44%	34%
Fall 2012	485	488	3.22	33%	35%

Source: CSUMB Office of Institutional Assessment and Research

Keeping this profile of the admissions landscape and the students which the campus serves in mind, it is clear that CSUMB continues to make good progress on both retention and graduation rates. From a one year low of 65% retention for our fall 2006 cohort, CSUMB has continued to increase retention, especially for first time freshmen, and maintained relatively strong retention rates for transfer students. While increases in retention are coming more slowly now, each increase suggests a higher graduation rate for the same cohort of students. FTF retention in the first year has particularly improved, as the following chart illustrates.

FTF One Year Retention

Cohort	Retention Rate (%)
Fall 2006	65%
Fall 2007	67%
Fall 2008	71%
Fall 2009	76%
Fall 2010	78%
Fall 2011	79%
Fall 2012	81%

Source: CSUMB Office of Institutional Assessment and Research

For transfer students, retention increased between fall 2008 and fall 2010, with an unexpected decline in fall 2011, and an improvement for fall 2012.

Upper Division Transfer One Year Retention

Cohort	Retention Rate (%)
Fall 2008	73%
Fall 2009	83%
Fall 2010	85%
Fall 2011	80%
Fall 2012	84%

Source: CSUMB Office of Institutional Assessment and Research

Additional evidence supports the interpretation that there has been an overall shift in campus climate favorable to retaining students. For example, Inside Track, which partnered with CSUMB to provide voluntary coaching for students in terms of retention, graduation, student success, and engagement between 2007 and 2013, reported that a few years ago, their coaches reported that 35-40% of the first-time freshmen they coached discussed a desire to transfer. In 2013, there were very few such comments. In addition, results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) suggest other evidence that a shifting climate has enhanced retention of FTF. For example, student assessment of their “overall satisfaction” with academic advising has improved from 60% in 2008 to 81% in 2011. These are just two examples which help elaborate on the increase in retention rates.

The campus is also making progress, albeit slowly, in improving graduation rates. For cohorts of FTF, four- and six-year graduation rates are rising. The retention and graduation of these cohorts provide striking evidence of the relationship between retention and graduation rates. For example, 2006 saw the lowest one-year retention rate for FTF (65%), so the four and six-year graduation rates are correspondingly lower. Higher retention rates since have tended to correlate with higher graduation rates. As such, the campus anticipates seeing additional increases in graduation rates as the benefits of increases in retention roll forward.

FTF Graduation Rates

Cohort	Four Year Graduation Rate (%)	Six Year Graduation Rate (%)
Fall 2004	13.6%	40.9%
Fall 2005	10.1%	37.5%
Fall 2006	8.8%	36%
Fall 2007	11.8%	37.8%
Fall 2008	16.3%	
Fall 2009	21.3%	

Source: CSUMB Office of Institutional Assessment and Research

CSUMB has been especially successful in its retention and graduation of underrepresented minorities (URMs). Many campuses have shown a significant gap between the graduation rates of URM versus non-URM students. Importantly, CSUMB, a federally designated Hispanic

Serving Institution, was one of only three campuses that have not shown an achievement gap between URM and non-URM students. And, unlike many other campuses, CSUMB has been able to retain students from underrepresented minorities (URM) at or above the rate for non-URM students without altering requirements for admissions (such as declaring impaction). Since CSUMB opened its doors in 1995, the institution has for the most part, graduated more URM than non-URMs within six years. The following table illustrates:

Six-Year Graduation Rate of All First-Time Freshmen Over Time

Cohort Year	Total Number of Students in Cohort	All Students Graduated	URM	Non-URM
1995	171	37.4%	42.9%	34.3%
1996	219	34.7%	31.6%	36.4%
1997	181	29.8%	33.3%	27.5%
1998	273	35.2%	34.7%	35.4%
1999	299	32.4%	28.4%	34.3%
2000	445	35.1%	35.0%	35.1%
2001	570	37.5%	40.1%	36.4%
2002	576	38.2%	47.8%	33.8%
2003	515	41.4%	44.7%	39.9%
2004	648	40.9%	37.2%	42.5%
2005	547	37.5%	40.3%	36.0%
2006	534	36.0%	31.4%	38.5%
2007	746	37.8%	38.3%	37.5%

Source: CSUMB Office of Institutional Assessment and Research

Given these data on retention and graduation rates, evaluating student success initiatives and their impact on retention and graduate rates has been one important area of focus for the campus. Given that “student success” was a core theme addressed in the Educational Effectiveness review in 2010, and one which continues to be of critical importance to the campus, CSUMB has continued to make progress in evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives.

A good example is a recent analysis of how student success initiatives impacted two-year retention of the fall 2009 cohort of first-time freshmen (FTFs) at CSUMB. Completed by Dr. Adolpho Santos, an American Council on Education Fellow at CSUMB in 2011-2012 during his fellowship year, the data demonstrate the crucial impact that student success programs like these have had on student retention. In his study, Dr. Santos examined 949 first time freshmen who began their academic careers in the fall of 2009, half of whom (474) received support from at least one program. The following table summarizes each program and the students served.

Program	Description
College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)	Supported by a federal grant 2007-2012, CAMP offered eligible students pre-college counseling and financial aid information. Collaborating with student services, faculty, and community-based organizations, CAMP provided first-year support services and outreach programs aimed at developing the skills necessary for first-time freshmen to succeed in college—all were URM students.
Inside Track	Inside Track provided intensive coaching focusing on academic success for a randomly selected group of students between 2007 and 2013.
TRIO Student Support Services (SSS)	SSS is a federally funded program designed to help first generation, low-income college students, and provides supplemental tutoring, advising, counseling, remediation and other support services to first generation low-income college students, including the programs Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Veteran's Upward Bound.
Project Higher Ground (PHG)	PHG is a living-learning community that involves faculty, residence hall advisors, and peer mentors who coordinate co-curricular activities and shared coursework within a residential living experience. PHG students tend to have average higher SAT/ACT scores, are 35% first-generation, and 19% URMs.
Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)	EOP serves entering freshman, hosts an orientation for entering transfer students, and provides support services for all continuing students through graduation.
Center for Student Success (CSS)	CSS opened its doors in 2008, funded by a

	Title V Hispanic Serving Institution grant focusing on student support, working to ensure the success of all students. Services provided include a range of Academic Success Workshops covering topics such as time management, test anxiety, note-taking, and stress management, as well as a “Back on Track” process for students on academic probation. While the program is open to all students, the majority of students served by the center are on academic probation. As a result, CSS students tend to have lower average GPAs, have failed more classes than students not in CSS, and nearly all students that are on probation were also in CSS.
--	--

Dr. Santos’ research suggests the important impact of these programs on retention. The following table summarizes these findings. In addition to the retention rates noted for each, the table provides data on the number of students who were retained in excess of 62.6% (the retention rate for all 2009 FTF) and in excess of 65.1% (the baseline retention rates for all 2009 FTF students *not* in a support program). Importantly, the data suggests that each of these programs has had a real impact on retaining students at CSUMB.

	CAMP	Inside Track	SSS	PHG	EOP	CSS	Not in support program
# FSF in 2009 cohort total	63	159	34	84	106	329	475
# Retained	47	101	29	59	74	168	309
% Retained	74.6%	63.5%	85.3%	70.2%	69.8%	51.1%	65.1%
# Exceeding 62.6%	7.56	1.5	7.72	6.42	7.64	-37.95	11.65
# Exceeding 65.1%	5.99	-2.51	6.87	4.14	4.99	-46.18	0

It should be noted that 245 (26%) of the students participated in more than one support program. Of the various combinations, students were most likely to participate in EOP and CAMP. Of the 49 students that participated in both EOP and CAMP, 37 (76%) were retained. EOP and CSS had 40 students that participate in both programs, and of those 25 (62.5%) were retained, suggesting that CSS and EOP support contribute to a better retention rate.

	EOP+CAMP=49	EOP+CSS=40
Number Retained	37	25
Percent Retained	76%	62.5%

One program in particular, The Center for Student Success (CSS), was of particular interest to the campus, as it served a population of students uniformly struggling academically. As one would expect, retention rates were lower than the general population. With its two year retention rate of 51.1%, the program seems to be less successful than others. However, consider that of the 127 students with cumulative GPAs of less than 2.0 in the 2009 FTF cohort, 115 were in CSS. Of those, 25 (or 22%) were retained. Of the 12 students out of 127 who were not in CSS and had cumulative GPAs of less than 2.0, not a single one was retained. This would suggest that CSS had an impact on the retention of some of CSUMB’s most academically challenged students who, without CSS, might not have remained in college.

Given these findings, Provost Kathy Cruz-Urbe decided to retain the services of the CSS program beyond fall 2013 when Title V grant funding ended. Supported by data generated by the Center for Student Success—tracking the kind and quality of contact with students and measuring the impact of their efforts on student GPA—the Provost institutionalized those services on a permanent basis as a way to serve some of the most academically vulnerable students on campus. Moreover, in order to optimize the relationship of student support services to advising, the campus folded CSS, advising, and Career Development into one integrated structure focused on advising and student success. These changes, which went into effect in fall 2013, should enhance the ability of the newly reorganized Center for Advising, Career and Student Success to meet a variety of student needs in one place. Reporting to the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the new Center will focus the work on the academic and professional development needs of students in a more integrated way—from their advising, student success, graduation, and career development needs. Moreover, the new structure will be supported by a new centralized model of academic advising, where undergraduate students are advised by professional advisors and faculty can focus on mentoring students. With these changes, the campus is committed to assessing the impact of these efforts on student success into the future.

3. Continuing Improvements to Assessment Processes and Program Review

The Commission's Action Letter encouraged CSUMB to continue its efforts at aligning assessment processes with program review. The Commission agreed with the findings of the Educational Effectiveness Review visiting team which recommended in its report that CSUMB "continue aligning assessment, program planning, and institutional research functions to develop further a culture of evidence and documentation to ensure data-driven decision-making" (2011, Educational Effectiveness Report, p. 41). Central to the campus response has been a commitment to move forward with integrating assessment across the campus in new ways.

One of the first steps in the new approach was the creation of Faculty Associates in each of the colleges to support various critical academic and administrative projects. Appointed by the Deans from the ranks of the full time tenure line faculty and supported with funding from Academic Affairs, Faculty Associates support assessment work and ensure the accuracy of curriculum content in the catalog for the academic departments in each college. Included in their work is supporting the completion of annual assessment projects and reports. Prior to the creation of Faculty Associates, annual assessment projects had been inconsistently completed and of variable quality. Faculty Associates have helped guide departments in their annual assessment work in a more coordinated fashion, linking departmental assessment work on the ground with broader assessment priorities at the institutional level.

A second step in the process of invigorating assessment work on campus was the Provost's decision to bring nationally recognized assessment scholar Dr. Peggy Maki to campus for a university-wide assessment retreat of faculty and administrators in spring 2012. At this retreat, Dr. Maki guided a discussion about how to create an assessment committee, how to structure the work of that committee, and how to cultivate critical partners in assessment work across campus.

As a third step, the Provost and the Chair of the Academic Senate jointly charged an Ad Hoc Assessment Committee to explore ways to improve and coordinate assessment work across the campus. Convening for the first time in May 2012, the group held a summer retreat to begin the discussion about priorities for the academic year and possible options for degree level learning outcomes. The Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee worked through AY 2012-2013 reviewing prior assessment reports, examining assessment models from other campuses, discussing degree level (baccalaureate) learning outcomes, and developing the framework and a draft of an institutional assessment plan which was approved by the Academic Senate and the Provost in fall 2013. (See attached Context for Assessment and Assessment Plan)

That assessment plan is being implemented during AY 2013-14. It retains successful elements of assessment that have been in place and incorporates a new approach to assessment built around degree-level core competencies as articulated in Standard 2 of the 2013 WASC Handbook of Accreditation. Several parts of the plan are worth highlighting:

- The Academic Senate voted in spring 2013 to revise its Bylaws and move the Assessment Committee from ad hoc to standing, signaling the critical importance faculty

will play in the new overall approach to assessment on campus. The Assessment Committee will work with the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA), Faculty Associates in the colleges, and faculty involved in assessment work to coordinate assessment efforts on campus and provide crucial faculty oversight and buy-in.

- The plan is centered initially on assessment of five degree level core competencies—critical thinking, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and written communication—at the degree level, using a schedule coordinated and managed by the Assessment Committee. The first focus, critical thinking and information literacy, is being rolled out during AY 2013-14 at the same time planning for the second, quantitative literacy, will commence for roll out in AY 2014-15. Planning for assessment of Oral Communication and Written Communication will begin in AY 2014-15 for roll out in AY 2015-16.
- Faculty Assessment Coordinators for each of these core competencies will oversee creation of rubrics (drawing on the Value Rubrics developed by AAC&U as a starting place) and will work with faculty in assessment co-ops to coordinate the collection of student work at all levels of the curriculum—from First Year Seminar through Capstone.
- TLA will support the data collection process, provide assessment workshops, manage faculty assessment co-ops, and draft assessment reports for the Assessment Committee to review. TLA will also manage the use of Taskstream to coordinate collection of student work for assessment purposes. TLA will support faculty using Taskstream in annual assessment activity through training materials and one-on-one support with the assistance of a new full time staff member with training in educational assessment and database management.
- TLA will also maintain a new assessment website (tla.csUMB.edu/assessment) which includes campus guidelines to assessment, links to important resources on assessment, and the first program reviews available digitally. Beginning in fall 2013, annual assessment plans and reports along with academic and service unit program reviews are being posted to this assessment website, a one stop source of information about assessment on the CSUMB website for internal and external audiences.
- Degree Level Assessment Sub-Groups will conduct assessment of student work collected for each core competency, with the first focusing on the core competencies of critical thinking and information literacy in summer 2014, reporting the results of its work to the Assessment Committee for deliberation about the implications of the work for the campus and reporting the findings to the CSUMB community.
- Guided by these findings, academic departments and programs have an opportunity to make curricular changes—new courses, changes to teaching and learning strategies, revisions to major learning outcomes, changes to curricular maps, etc. to improve student learning in the core competency area assessed. Feedback loop co-ops in TLA will support this process.
- Assessment of any curricular changes made will happen during the next assessment cycle to see whether and how student learning has changed as a result of any curricular or course level interventions.
- Academic Affairs has pledged to support the assessment plan with appropriate resources. For example, in AY 2013-14, funding has been allocated to support Faculty

Associates in the Colleges to work with departments on their assessment projects, faculty coordinators for planning and collecting data related to core competencies in critical thinking and information literacy, and quantitative literacy, faculty participation in assessment co-ops through TLA, and a summer work group to examine data collected during the AY regarding student learning and critical thinking and information literacy.

4. Academic Rigor

In their 2011 action letter, the Commission also urged CSUMB to continue work on academic rigor to ensure that it is “embedded in program planning and review processes as well as teaching and learning.” The campus has indeed continued this work concurrent with attention to assessment, evaluation of student success initiatives, as well as retention and graduation rates. Importantly, the campus engaged in a variety of activities regarding the meaning of academic rigor leading up to the adoption of a campus definition, a recommendation of the Educational Effectiveness review visiting team. Coming to that definition was the result of a multi-faceted process, one that is still continuing.

To begin, the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) sponsored a faculty co-op on Academic Rigor in fall 2011. The co-op developed a preliminary definition of academic rigor which they shared with a group of over 50 faculty members attending a workshop exploring the concept during Faculty Planning Week in January 2012. Following up on this conversation, a second faculty co-op sponsored by TLA in spring 2012 provided space for faculty to continue the deliberations. One of the hallmarks of that co-op was the concern that the term “rigor” did not capture fully what was emerging as a shared understanding of a working definition. So to capture what faculty participating in the co-op increasingly saw as a need for a student friendly approach to encouraging and promoting “rigor,” the group adopted the phrase “Academic Excellence” as a way to focus the campus conversation about rigor and begin to explore its implications across CSUMB.

In May 2012, TLA and the Center for Academic Technologies (CAT) held a summer workshop to discuss the newly reframed idea of “Academic Excellence” focusing on the challenges students face in attaining Academic Excellence, identifying potential barriers to student success. A fall 2012 TLA Academic Excellence faculty co-op followed up on the work of the summer workshop. They strategized how to address the many challenges CSUMB students face in attaining academic excellence and determined that adopting a campus-wide (e.g. administration, faculty, and student services) culture of helping students develop “habits of mind” was needed for success both inside and outside the classroom.

Out of this work, a brochure was developed and is being distributed on campus to highlight the linkage between those habits of mind and student success (see attached Welcome to the Learning Community at CSUMB Student Brochure). A section of the brochure includes a list of specific “Habits of Mind that Lead to Academic Excellence,” including flexibility, persistence, engagement, and metacognition and offers resources for students to consult for more information. The brochure also includes a graph highlighting five core skill areas students would

develop—the same core competencies which are the centerpiece of the campus assessment plan: critical thinking, information literacy, quantitative literacy, oral communication, and written communication. This brochure—widely distributed to students in multiple venues—is part of a wider campaign to encourage academic excellence as a shared campus value. For example, one professor in the Division of Humanities and Communication has used the brochure as a resource in five of her general education oral and written communication courses as a way to focus students on issues of academic literacy and academic identity development. Faculty are also using the brochure to support workshops for students in developmental writing courses to help students identify habits of mind that can lead to student success. It has also been distributed in First Year Seminar courses as part of an introduction to what will be expected of students in terms of college level academic work.

Among faculty, the conversation continued to refine an understanding of “academic excellence” and “rigor” and the relationship of the two terms. While these had been increasingly used interchangeably, “academic excellence” in particular was the term preferred in working with students. During Faculty Planning Week in January 2013, over 50 people (primarily faculty) participated in a workshop with the charge to “Refine our working definition of academic rigor/excellence (developed in fall 2011) for CSUMB that we can bring to Academic Senate.” The result was a working definition of academic rigor at CSUMB that was endorsed by the Academic Senate in spring 2013 and that will focus the campus understanding of rigor:

“Academic rigor is expressed through a campus culture of integrated and scaffolded high expectations grounded in outcomes, academic challenge, and transformative discovery within an engaged learning community.”

The conversation continues about the relationship of academic rigor to academic excellence. For example, concurrent with these deliberations TLA continued a co-op focusing on Academic Excellence during the spring 2013 semester, teasing out what “habits of mind” identified in earlier conversations meant in practice. Faculty participating in the co-op explored ways to help foster two particular habits of mind—creativity and engagement—sharing classroom activities and assignments used that semester and discussing how to evaluate the effectiveness of those activities for student learning.

One example of how these conversations about “academic rigor” and “academic excellence” are permeating the campus at the institutional level is the infusion of the Senate definition of academic rigor into the Program Review Procedure Manual in fall 2013. Successful program reviews will now be expected to demonstrate how major learning outcomes “enable rigorous and scaffolded learning within the major / discipline.” Programs are specifically expected to provide evidence of academic rigor, drawing on the definition adopted by the Senate. Programs are expected to demonstrate how the program builds upon student learning in general education, how the program contributes toward “a campus culture of academic rigor,” how faculty ensure academic rigor, and how students in the program “experience transformative discovery.” Program Review Committees will need to, in part, evaluate whether programs “demonstrate that rigor is required throughout the curriculum by clearly articulating high expectations and providing support for achievement of outcomes at the highest level.” As

the Academic Excellence Co-op, the Senate definition of “academic rigor,” and the infusion of that definition into the Academic Program review process illustrate, CSUMB is still exploring what the concepts of “rigor” and “excellence” will mean on campus—for students, for faculty, and for the institution.

5. Addressing Financial Challenges

In their 2011 action letter, the Commission noted the “sharp decline in financial resources provided by the state of California”; of particular concern was the “potential consequences of funding reductions on educational programs and student learning.” The Commission asked the campus to “report on the ways in which it is addressing these challenges.”

As part of the California State University (CSU) system, CSUMB has felt the impact of the reductions in state support to the system but has mitigated the effects of these reductions in many ways, both as part of the system and through campus specific actions. Below is a summary of how CSUMB has done so. The primary response of the CSU system to the reductions in state general fund support was to increase tuition (formerly called the state university fee). However, given the fact that historically the great preponderance of funding in the system was state general fund support, the system could not possibly supplant the loss of state funding with tuition increases on a dollar for dollar basis even though tuition rates nearly doubled in the period since AY 2007-08. Consequently, the Chancellor’s Office (CO) reviewed and approved a series of expenditure reduction plans submitted by each campus. Since the situation tended to be very fluid, planning for revenue enhancement and expenditure reduction was a nearly continual process. During this process, the CO came to understand more fully that smaller campuses such as CSUMB simply did not have the flexibility or resources that larger campuses had, and, consequently, CSUMB gained special consideration. For example, CSUMB was essentially exempt from the system effort to eliminate or at least reduce the level of California resident enrollment in excess of the number funded by the state. This allowed CSUMB to gain additional revenue (made all the more significant after the tuition increases) to support instruction and further offset the cuts in state support.

Other system strategies included allowing greater use of one-time reserve funds and other designated funds to backfill or to use in transitioning through the reduction process. Most recently, the CSU system has engaged in positive negotiations and changes in regulations with the state’s executive and legislative branches. In consideration of the possible passage of Proposition 30 (a plebiscite on the November 2012 ballot to temporarily increase income and sales taxes), the CSU offered to rescind a tuition increase slated for 2012-13 in exchange for a restoration of a similar amount in state support. Proposition 30 passed, the tuition increase was rolled back, and the CSU received an additional \$125 million in state funding starting in fiscal year 2013-14. Other actions, such as gaining the authority to bargain health benefits with the bargaining units within the CSU rather than purely be the end recipient of CalPERS negotiated rates, offer the prospect of long-term cost restraint.

Campus specific planning for and implementation of actions to ameliorate, to the greatest extent possible, the consequences of huge cuts in state revenues and expenditures were

extensive and varied across the CSU. The necessity to protect the academic core of the university was CSUMB's primary tenet in formulating responses to the various state and system mandates for cuts. Even before the precipitous fall in state revenue, CSUMB recognized that the system's three percent cap on reserves was not going to provide the level of cushion and sustainability that would be required in light of the looming crisis. CSUMB's senior leadership was a strong proponent of enhanced reserve levels even if it meant being fined by the system for having "excess" reserves. This worked much to CSUMB's advantage once the cuts began. CSUMB's collective voice was instrumental in convincing the CO that smaller campuses needed special consideration in the apportionment of the cuts.

Another issue of great importance was in the continuation of the upward enrollment trajectory. Continuing growth would provide additional tuition revenue that would offset cuts in state support plus place CSUMB in a much better position at the far end of the recessionary cycle. For example, current efforts underway to increase nonresidents (particularly international students) will have a positive financial effect by making the university less dependent on state support while furthering tuition revenue and concomitantly advancing the goals of diversity in the ethnic and racial composition of the student body. By increasing international student enrollment, the student body will become more diverse and will increase the number of full-pay nonresident students. In fall 2013, for example, the campus saw a notable increase in the number of international students in residence at CSUMB, with the highest number yet in fall 2013—a total of 151 students.

In its operations, CSUMB eliminated discretionary expenditures for all but the most essential expenditures and tightened executive level control of those expenditures (e.g., travel). Funded but vacant positions were excised from the budget. Recently, CSUMB has moved to further the linkage of planning and budget by more fully integrating these processes by combining those considerations into a seamless process under the Strategic Budget Committee (with cross campus representation of all campus constituencies) from the very outset. Previously, the linkage of planning and budgetary considerations tended to occur more toward the end of the planning process in the Budget Advisory Group, but now the linkage occurs from the very inception of the planning processes in the Strategic Budget Committee.

Given these responses to challenging economic conditions, the campus nevertheless continued to invest in its academic programs. The Academic Affairs budget, for example, increased from \$19.5 million to \$25 million between AY 2007/8 and AY 2012/13, enabling CSUMB to maintain access to the courses students need.

As a result of these changes, the funding outlook for CSUMB over the next few years is much more optimistic than has been the case in the recent past. The state's enacted budget for 2013-14 contained a 5% general fund base increase for the CSU. Even with this improvement, the state general fund allocated to the CSU in 2013-14 is approximately \$638 million lower than the amount allocated in 2007-08. The governor's initial budget proposal for 2013-14 contained a plan for continuing stabilization in the out-years, identifying increases of 5% for 2014-15 and 4% increases in 2015-16 and in 2016-17. While these goals are subject to change, the funding outlook is in ascendancy, reversing the downward trend experienced since 2007-08. The

prospect of funding increases provided the impetus for discussions at the highest executive levels of the CSU system to allow enrollment growth for the smaller institutions. Those discussions bore fruit, with CSUMB receiving state support for approximately 9% enrollment growth in 2014-15, well in excess of the CSU average. With the revitalization of state funding, the opportunity exists for the smaller institutions and CSUMB to grow to the critical mass sufficient to move from the current situation of diseconomies of scale to one of actually achieving economies of scale (at approximately 8,000 California resident FTES for CSUMB).

In summary, CSUMB has adjusted adroitly to the budget reductions of the past few years. CSUMB has protected, and in fact enhanced, funding for the academic core by increasing or maintaining the budget for Academic Affairs in each year of the financial crisis except one. Such a commitment to maintaining the quality of academic programs through sustained funding despite the system's economic challenges is critical to note. The 2013-14 budget for academic affairs is 28% larger than the 2007-08 budget, the last year before the recession. In emerging from the lingering effects of the recession, CSUMB has positioned itself as a financially strong institution. (See attached Key Financial Ratios document for more details).

6. Comparative Study of Capstone Models

In their 2011 action letter, the Commission encouraged CSUMB to "continue its comparative study of the various capstone models on campus, with a particular focus on the assessment of student learning conducted under each of them" (2011, Action Letter, p.2). The Teaching and Learning in Capstone Courses project is underway now and timed for completion by the 2019 accreditation review. This project builds on a study of capstones completed for our last accreditation. We can report ongoing progress in this project.

After our last accreditation, CSUMB started a campus-wide discussion to determine how capstone, a high impact practice, can increase student success. One way that conversation has taken place was through a faculty learning community: a co-op sponsored by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment drawing capstone instructors from twelve departments during fall 2010, spring 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012. This co-op developed a survey for the campus to use to capture needed data about various capstone models being used on campus. The survey asked departments to describe their particular capstone model(s), outline the requirements, describe the role faculty play in the capstone process, elaborate on how the program prepares students for capstone, note whether students work with outside partners, describe how faculty assess student learning in capstone, outline the challenges and scalability issues raised by the model, and convey what the department is doing to address those challenges. This survey was conducted in spring 2013 is being analyzed during the 2013-14 AY in order to identify trends for capstone models, common issues and concerns related to maintaining the quality of capstone models, scalability, and resource needs.

Additionally, the campus has begun the process of identifying how to assess the effectiveness of capstone through direct assessment of student projects themselves with an eye toward assessing the CSUMB commitment to capstone as a defining feature of its educational model. While analysis of the spring 2013 survey will help identify how to approach this part of the

project, the campus has begun to build the kind of intellectual capacity so necessary for this work. For example, a subset of the capstone learning community attended the AAC&U High Impact Practices Institute in 2011. From that institute, the learning community created a plan to investigate what makes a successful capstone student, focusing carefully on the kinds of preparation needed for that success. The plan includes working with various departments to assess student performance at various points in this developmental process—what they have called milestone assignments—which precede capstone itself. Data from this work will inform the campus understanding of student learning in various capstone models with an eye toward understanding the degree to which scaffolding within a major can lead to successful capstones.

Faculty members in several departments have started this work—including Japanese Language and Culture, Spanish, Math, and Environmental Studies. Through their annual assessment projects, faculty members in each of these majors have started to explore the purpose, parameters, and sustainability of their particular capstone models. For example, faculty in Spanish focused their 2011-12 assessment project defining what a successful capstone student/capstone project should look like. After developing a rubric modeled on examples from the AAC&U Value rubrics, the faculty evaluated examples of student capstone projects from spring 2012 using the rubric as their guide. The faculty came away with many lessons, including an awareness of a “gap of readiness to conduct research in the capstone course,” a finding they are now addressing through changes in their approach to capstone preparation. One example of those changes is a new awareness of certain benchmarks students need to reach during their year-long capstone experience. The campus anticipates more work like this to continue as part of the Teaching and Learning in Capstone Courses project.

Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution

Instructions: This brief section should identify any other significant changes that have occurred or issues that have arisen at the institution (e.g., changes in key personnel, addition of major new programs, modifications in the governance structure, unanticipated challenges, or significant financial results) that are not otherwise described in the preceding section. This information will help the Interim Report Committee gain a clearer sense of the current status of the institution and understand the context in which the actions of the institution discussed in the previous section have taken place.

The new president of CSUMB, Eduardo Ochoa, has begun the process of setting some new priorities for the future of the campus—building on areas of established strength, focusing on meeting regional needs as effective stewards for the area, and developing a culture of “inclusive excellence.”

CSUMB has become a strong, mature institution, with strong enrollment demand (including transfer students), a robust suite of institutional services and capacities, a considerably improved physical plant, good financial condition, and a reformed general education program with a more mainstream structure, leading to improved transfer rates. We are now poised to move to the next level by developing our academic areas of distinction and strengthening our role as catalyst for regional development.

Monterey County has two key basic industries that are the engines of its economy: agriculture and hospitality. The Salinas Valley is the lettuce capital of the world and is a major national producer of fresh produce valued at over \$4 billion annually. This sector has unique problems distinct from the California Central Valley—such as salination of the water table, drip irrigation methods, soil chemistry, and logistics—that can be the focus of our research and education programs. Accordingly, we will focus on developing a targeted research agenda for our science programs and an agriculture business concentration in our business administration program. The hospitality industry in the Monterey peninsula benefits from a world-class geographical setting, but is generally perceived to be delivering services that for the most part are not up to world-class standards for comparable destinations. We will therefore also strengthen our hospitality program and build closer links with the industry to address that issue. Both the agribusiness and hospitality concentrations will benefit from a general strengthening of the business school centered on the push for AACSB accreditation, a goal that we will pursue after growing the school's enrollment to the level required to reach the necessary critical mass of faculty.

Our location next to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary provides us a unique opportunity to develop an outstanding marine science teaching and research program. This locational advantage is enhanced by the nearby presence of CSU's Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, a resource serving all CSU students, but among which the Monterey Bay students represent the largest portion. We are well on our way to achieving distinction in this field, and we will continue to build on that strength.

In addition to locational niches, a university frequently develops remarkable strength in one or more fields by serendipitous growth of high-quality programs. CSUMB has a few candidates for us to focus support in this category, with the Cinematic Arts and Technology department as the leading one, having assembled a high-quality group of faculty with significant links to Hollywood and a growing reputation that is attracting high-quality students to its program.

Pursuant to some of these initiatives, a new College of Business was created and its founding Dean was hired in fall 2013. (Formerly, the School of Business reported to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies.) With a new Dean in place effective September 1, 2013, the campus is poised to invest in its most popular single undergraduate major—Business Administration. A new academic building, the Business and Information Technology Building, will include spaces for classrooms, labs, faculty offices, break-out rooms, tutoring areas, and workrooms. Groundbreaking occurred in fall 2013 with construction slated to be complete within two years. Such an investment will increase the space capacity of CSUMB--a critical issue as enrollment grows--as well as enhance curricular offerings.

The creation of the College of Business has also opened opportunities for rethinking the optimal way to organize the remaining programs in the College of Professional Studies, as we look forward to substantial growth in the next decade. The Provost is currently conducting a series of campus forums to review alternatives and receive input from the campus community.

CSU campuses are regional comprehensive universities with a mission to serve as a resource for economic, social, and cultural development to the regions they serve. CSUMB is now poised to play a more active, engaged role in its service area as the only public four-year university in Monterey County. In addition to established relationships with local municipalities, community colleges, and K-12 institutions, we have identified two major venues for us to make progress in this area: the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) and a potential county-wide collective-impact partnership to establish a cradle-to-career pipeline (based on the STRIVE network methodology).

The California legislature created FORA as a regional governance body to oversee development of the former Fort Ord to redress the adverse economic impact of the base closure. This was to be done in a manner that addressed environmental concerns, equity issues, and by developing sustainable industries. To that end, a visionary Base Reuse Plan (BRP) was developed. Regrettably, the severe recession since 2008 has created pressure among local municipalities to accept any development project that might generate jobs and/or tax revenue, with BRP standards as a secondary consideration, if any. Thus, FORA has become less of a forum for coherent, strategic regional decision-making and more of an arena for turf battles among jurisdictions that lose sight of longer-term regional considerations. In this kind of environment, CSUMB's ex officio seat at the FORA board was personally assumed by our president and used to promote a regional, long-term perspective and to make available the intellectual resources of the university to address community issues. (Noteworthy in that regard is the recent colloquium on regional economic development organized by CSUMB.) Over time, our engagement is having a positive impact.

CSUMB, with its diverse faculty, staff, and students and with its physical location equidistant from the Peninsula and the Salinas Valley, can act as a bridge that can unite a divided region. A perfect vehicle to that effect that can also address the national education challenge locally is a cradle-to-career pipeline partnership that involves all significant institutions and sectors of our community. Nancy Zimpher (now President of SUNY) developed such a collective-impact partnership in the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky region when she was president of the University of Cincinnati. The methodology they perfected there has given rise to multiple similar efforts across the country, and to a national network supported by a national staff (www.strivenetwork.org), including Portland, Oregon (spearheaded by Portland State University), Santa Barbara County, and East Bay. We are in the process of convening a community partnership with key leaders in Monterey County. Such a partnership will achieve multiple objectives: improve educational outcomes and equity; connect disparate areas and agencies of Monterey County, build trust and social capital; and enhance the central role and recognition of CSUMB as a regional resource.

President Ochoa has also created a new office of Inclusive Excellence reporting directly to the President. That office will work to leverage diversity and inclusion as key institutional strategies in preparing our graduates for a 21st century global, diverse, and multicultural society.

Concluding Statement

***Instructions:** Reflect on how the institutional responses to the issues raised by the Commission have had an impact upon the institution, including future steps to be taken.*

As this interim report demonstrates, CSUMB has made great progress on all the issues outlined by the Commission in their 2011 Action Letter. CSUMB has increased its focus on data informed decision making—including analysis of retention and graduation rates, student success initiatives, program review, and assessment of student learning. By ensuring that decisions are made on the basis of evidence, CSUMB can respond to the circumstances at hand and think strategically about future directions, particularly in terms of academic programs and student success. The campus has also improved its infrastructure for conducting such analysis—investing in additional staff for Institutional Assessment and Research and creating a new campus wide Assessment Committee and Assessment Plan. That infrastructure will support the assessment and evaluation of new, and existing, programs and initiatives informed by data, forged through shared deliberation, and supported by a shared commitment to continuous renewal. As illustrated by the Program Review process, these structures and processes ensure data driven analysis of effectiveness and provide a mechanism through which programs—both academic and support—identify ongoing strengths and create plans for improvement. And, because the process is cyclical, the structure enhances the ability of those programs to close the feedback loop. CSUMB has also made progress toward enhancing academic rigor—creating a new shared definition of academic excellence and beginning the process of disseminating and using that definition in working with students and evaluating academic programs. Finally, the financial state of the university has clearly improved since reaccreditation, ensuring greater support for the continued growth and development of the campus as a whole under new leadership. While there is more work to do as CSUMB anticipates its next accreditation review in 2019, progress made since 2011 provides a solid foundation upon which to build.

Supporting attachments included with this report:

- Progress, Timeline and Action Steps on Key Issues of Concern: 2011-Present Table
- 2013 Program Review Manual
- Context for Assessment at CSUMB
- Assessment Plan for CSUMB Nov 2013
- Data Exhibits for CSUMB
- Key Financial Ratios & 6-30-13 Financial Statements Unaudited
- Welcome to the Learning Community at CSUMB Student Brochure
- Organization Charts—Comparing 2011 to the Present