

## 2020 Self-Study Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

### STANDARD I

#### Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

\* Extend the 2015-20 Strategic Plan one additional year to institute action plans that could improve the eight partially achieved and 15 failed strategic success measures, complete a third strategic assessment cycle, and inform the development of a 2021-26 Strategic Plan with the assessment results, results of the 2020 Self-Study, and results of the 2020 visiting team report.

\* Create a specific strategic goal for the 2021-26 Strategic Plan to improve the “culture of assessment” at Cal U (per Self-Study IP 4) with three outcomes: sustainability of OIE personnel and assessment data, 100% compliance rates for submission of annual Assessment Plan and Results Reports (academic programs and administrative service units), and 100% compliance rates for submission of periodic assessments such as Strategic Plans, State System program reviews, and CAS Student Affairs program reviews.

\* If Goal 2 persists with the next strategic plan, consider adding a specific strategic objective and related success measures to develop an effective program evaluation and prioritization process (based on accepted program performance criteria such as the Robert C. Dickeson model) in order to evaluate and rank academic programs from strongest to weakest. These results would inform decisions regarding program reductions to achieve financial sustainability, with a significant portion of cost savings allocated to retrain displaced faculty; develop new, relevant programs; and strengthen the sustainability of remaining programs.

\* Incorporate Strategic Plan goals, objectives, and success measures into the existing Nuventive yearly assessment cycle. This would require identifying and designating specific assessment leaders for the Strategic Plan goals and success measures with an expectation for annual Plan and Results reporting on progress and action plans to incrementally improve achievement.

\* Merge the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) into one complementary unit to leverage the strengths of both units for providing better data and improved institutional effectiveness throughout the University.

\* Develop an institutional funding model with appropriate incentives to sustain and improve resources (personnel, budget, and data) for managing Cal U’s revised annual, General Education, and periodic program assessment processes.

\* Decrease the number of success measures to better focus on critical measures that can have the greatest impact on achievement of strategic objectives and goals. Also, consider increasing benchmarks for success measure achievement to facilitate better-focused or more innovative efforts to obtain better results.

### STANDARD II

#### Opportunities for Improvement

\* Evaluate the guidance and policies that govern the management of conflicts of interest, enhance accountability for noncompliance, and establish what should be in place to identify and manage risks.

\* Improve the transparency of University management decisions for public accountability.

\* Strengthen internal communications across campus and more effectively disseminate information about rights, policies, and procedures. Consolidate pertinent information on the University’s website and improve accessibility to pertinent information.

\* Ensure full use of the results of the HEDS Diversity and Equity Climate by establishing a standing committee responsible for administering the survey, analyzing the data, developing interventions to address any issues emerging in the results, and assessing the effectiveness of these interventions. The

Climate Survey provides the means for the University to assess its campus climate and take steps to ensure that issues impacting Cal U are confronted and ameliorated.

### **STANDARD III**

#### **Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation**

The following opportunities for improvement and innovation are provided to inform the direction and scope of the 2021-16 Cal U Strategic Planning process for the design and delivery of the student experience.

\* Create a specific strategic goal for the 2021-26 Strategic Plan to improve the culture of assessment at Cal U per self-study IP 4 with three outcomes: sustainability of OIE personnel and assessment data, 100% compliance rates for submission of annual Assessment Plan and Results Reports from all academic program and student success units, and 100% compliance rates for submission of periodic State System program reviews.

\* Add a statement to all new faculty appointment letters indicating their expectation for leadership or participation in academic program assessment (annual, periodic State System, and/or General Education).

\* Academic Assessment Results Reports should provide more comprehensive action plans based on the literature of best pedagogical practices in the science of teaching and learning. These plans should be prioritized for assessment-based funding (if needed) by the USAC and Budget and Planning Committee.

\* Provide ongoing assessment and accreditation professional development for all administrative and academic personnel.

\* Develop an institutional funding model with appropriate incentives to sustain and improve resources (personnel, budget, and data) required for managing the revised annual and periodic (State System) academic program assessment processes.

\* Establish administrative oversight for the General Education program at the provost- or dean-level and provide a budget line to appropriately fund incentives to sustain the revised annual General Education assessment process.

\* Develop university-wide incentives for managers and academic program assessment leaders (including senior management) to be responsible for working with the OIE to ensure quality outcomes and the implementation of improvement-based action plans within their respective organizational units and to reward best-practice assessment processes, with incentives such as a fund to provide annual recognition and awards for best practices, best-practice presentations through FPDC, TLC, and other forms, and implementation of best-practice grant programs.

\* Collaborate with the State System and other State System universities to obtain a system-wide license for a digital experience management system such as Qualtrics (preferred) to better support faculty research and academic program/administrative service assessment processes and obtain a system-wide license for a digital Curriculum Inventory Management (CIM) system.

\* Merge the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) into one complementary unit to leverage the strengths of both units for providing better data and improved institutional effectiveness throughout the University.

\* Develop and implement a process for assigning academic advisors to new students with a unit assessment outcome of achieving assigned advisors for 100% of new students each academic term.

\* Collaborate through academic governance constituents to develop an effective program evaluation and prioritization process (based on accepted program performance criteria such as the Robert C. Dickson model) to evaluate and rank academic programs from strongest to weakest.

## **STANDARD IV**

### **Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation**

The following opportunities for improvement and innovation are provided to inform the direction and scope of the 2021-16 Cal U strategic planning process for academic and administrative support of the student experience.

- \* Add a statement to all professional staff appointment letters and job descriptions indicating the expectation for leadership or participation in annual assessment.

- \* Provide ongoing assessment and accreditation professional development for all administrative and academic personnel.

- \* Develop an institutional funding model with appropriate incentives to sustain and improve resources (personnel, budget, and data) required for managing the revised annual and periodic program/unit assessment processes.

- \* Increase student engagement to enhance the student experience by:

- \* Expanding the leadership program offered through Student Affairs

- \* Developing co-curricular mapping of experiences offered through Student Affairs (e.g., identify competencies to map, identify experiences that can produce outcomes, and connect the competencies with the experiences)

- \* Address the growing mental health challenges that students face and ensure that adequate staffing is available in the Counseling Center.

- \* Work with University Development to enhance fundraising opportunities for scholarships.

- \* Merge and centralize academic student support services (STEM Assistance Lab, Writing Center, Reading Clinic, and the Tutoring Center) in one central location. This would create a comprehensive learning entity (possibly named the Vulcan Learning Commons) to improve and better evaluate the impact of coordinated academic services on student retention and success.

- \* Conduct a systems audit of the functions in the Office of Academic Success to analyze its effectiveness and efficiencies. This includes resource allocation, processes, personnel, and outcomes.

## **STANDARD V**

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- \* One step toward including everyone in the process of assessment is to provide a common language and process that everyone can embrace. Toward that end, Cal U is attempting to centralize assessment in the decision-making about resource allocation. This will also require an improvement in the communication of assessment results and actions to stakeholders.

- \* Develop a funding model to ensure continuation of the GEAP process.

- \* Improve processes to ensure that the General Education/institutional outcomes are more effectively communicated throughout the University and used more widely for institutional planning.

- \* Task Deans and Chairs with responsibility for supporting and reinforcing implementation and documentation of improvement activities identified in Assessment Action Plans.

- \* Integrate accountability for assessment into appointment letters and management evaluation forms.

- \* Develop partnership between APAC, AESAC, USAC, GEAC, and SAAC with TLC in identifying needs and opportunities for professional development to help departments build and institutionalize their assessment practices.

## STANDARD VI

### Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

\* Improve documentation of the feedback loop for processes, assess these changes and, in the spirit of continuous improvement, systematically update these processes. This is important to ensure transparency in the decision-making processes and the systematic changes occurring through the State System Redesign.

\* Transparency of resources and planning in communicating topics of significance to Cal U's faculty and staff must be improved.

\* The Functional Cost Tool should be used to analyze departmental return-on-investment and to evaluate program viability to aid in program prioritization.

\* Leverage the university-wide Tuition Pricing Task Force to develop new pricing models for students to assist with recruiting efforts.

## STANDARD VII

### Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

\* Assessment of the shared governance system clearly points to opportunities for improvement. Because faculty and staff report a weakness in institutional communication, the first improvement will be to develop better tools and strategies for communication about the shared governance system and how it operates. Cal U is addressing the issue in part through the creation of a Shared Governance Decision-Making Matrix Tool (VII.5.6). The matrix identifies the roles of various groups in key academic and financially oriented decisions. Its purpose is to provide guidance and clarity in identifying which University constituents have authority to make and approve decisions, and which constituents are to be consulted and offer recommendations for those decisions.

\* The matrix should be employed to facilitate improved assessment of the governance model. All governance stakeholders should be periodically assessed to determine if the mechanisms of shared governance are effectively contributing to decision making at Cal U. When communication problems are discovered, the University should consider adjusting the model to improve communication for better-informed decision making. Additionally, the current Shared Governance webpage should be revised to include detailed illustrations and narratives describing all elements of the governance process.

\* Given the results of the shared governance survey in the context of the current lean budget environment, the administration also must work to better gain the trust of faculty and staff. This can be accomplished by proactively seeking earlier faculty and staff input through appropriate governance entities for discussions about important university-wide issues. At the State System level, the Chancellor's initiatives to foster openness and transparency are an important step in establishing trust between state officials and statewide faculty union representatives. Trust at the state level can be applied to encourage similar trust at the local level, particularly if more faculty and staff input is included for all levels of administrative decisions.

\* Better communication across the University could occur by mitigating existing governance silos (e.g., academic, staff, student government) with the creation of a strategic-level integrative governance committee (e.g., University Senate or University Strategic Assessment Committee) capable of deliberations regarding important, university-wide issues. An integrative committee at the convergence of the governance model also could strengthen the link between university-wide assessment and the existing Planning and Budgeting Committee as expected by Requirement of Affiliation #10.

\* Cal U should turn self-study Institutional Priority #4, (Creating a Comprehensive System of Institutional Effectiveness) into a goal for the 2021-26 University Strategic Plan, with related

outcomes for personnel and data sustainability. Cal U should formalize and continue to appropriately staff an Office of Institutional Effectiveness with a minimum of an Associate Provost-level director, a permanent university-wide Assessment Manager, and a full-time Management Technician to operate and sustain the digital assessment management system.

\* Finally, a second wave of the AAUP Governance Survey should be administered to monitor changes in attitudes and perceptions toward shared governance initiatives and make improvements where needed. When all is accomplished, students, faculty, and staff will have more confidence and input in the shared governance system and its operation. Most importantly, the perception of shared governance by the different stakeholders will have better alignment for the common good as the University works together to make it a better place for all.