

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

ACCREDITATION REVIEW

To California State University Fresno

Date of Visit
October 20-22, 2015

Team Roster

Edward Ray, Chair
President, Oregon State University
Kathi A. Ketcheson, Assistant Chair
Director of Institutional Research and Planning,
Portland State University
Anita B. Enriquez
Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs,
University of Guam
Gary A. Miller
Adjunct Professor, Jabs School of Business, California Baptist University
Patricia A. Mitchell
Chair, Department of Leadership Studies, University of San Francisco
Richard Osborn
WASC Vice President and Staff Liaison

The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 WASC Senior College and University Standards of Accreditation and prepared the report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University.

The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter were made available to the public by publication on the WASC website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT	
A. Description of the Institution and the Reaccreditation Process	1
B. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report, and Supporting Evidence	6
SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS	
Component 1: Response to Issues Raised in Previous Commission Actions and Reviews	8
Component 2: Compliance with Standards and Federal Requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators	9
Component 3: Defining the Meaning of Degrees and Ensuring Their Quality and Rigor	10
Component 4: Educational Quality. Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation	14
Component 5: Student Success. Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation	17
Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement. Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data, and Evidence	22
Component 7: Sustainability. Financial Viability, Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment	23
Component 9: Reflection and Plans for Improvement	28
SECTION III – EVALUATION OF ELECTRONIC EXHIBIT PORTFOLIO	31
SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	34
APPENDICES	36
A. Federal Compliance Forms	
1. Credit Hour Review	37
2. Marketing and Recruitment Review	38
3. Student Complaints Review	39
4. Transfer Policy Review	40
B. Distance Education	41
C. Report on Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership	44

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Reaccreditation Process

Background information

California State University Fresno (Fresno State), one of 23 campuses in the California State University System (CSU), was established in 1911. It is located in an urban setting in an important agricultural region in the central valley of California. Highly engaged with its community, the university provides higher education opportunities within its 17,000 square mile service area to a student body that includes traditionally underserved students. Fresno State is a U.S. Department of Education designated Minority-Serving Institution in two categories: Hispanic-Serving Institution and Asian-American/ Native American/Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.

As reported in the institutional report, total enrollment in fall 2012 was 22,565, with 19,704 undergraduates, 2,266 graduate students, and 595 post-baccalaureate students. In fall 2014, enrollment had increased to 23,179, largely as a result of increases in undergraduate enrollment. New freshman enrollment increased from 3,139 in fall 2012 to 3,533 in fall 2014.

The percentage of minority students in 2012 was 58.8%, and for underrepresented minority students (URM), 44.0%. By 2014, the percentage of URM had increased to 47.0%. The largest group of URM students was Hispanic: 38.8% in fall 2012 and 43.3% in fall 2014. Half of entering students at Fresno State required remediation in math and English, and many required both.

First-year retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen (FTFTFR) were high: 83.2% for the fall 2011 cohort and 82.7% for the fall 2013 cohort. The overall six-year graduation rate for the fall 2007 cohort was 48.6%; for the fall 2009 cohort, it increased to 58.4%. While the

graduation rate for White students was 67.3%, the rate for Hispanic students (56.5%) also was strong. As stated in the institutional report, the percentage of Pell Grant-eligible FTFTFR, and also of transfer students, was 65.0% in 2011-2012. The percentage of first-generation students was 71.0%. In that year, the average loan indebtedness for baccalaureate degree recipients who began as freshmen was \$17,491; the loan debt default rate was 5.0%.

Programs and departments were organized within 8 colleges: Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (JCAST); Arts and Humanities; Craig School of Business; Kremen School of Education and Human Development; Lyles College of Engineering; Health and Human Services; Science and Mathematics; and Social Sciences. The university offered 65 baccalaureate programs and 48 master's programs. It also offered a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and joint doctorates in Physical Therapy (with San Jose State) and a Doctorate in Nursing Practice (with CSU Bakersfield). Eight programs were offered through distance education, including one doctorate, five master's and two bachelor's programs.

In 2012-2013, the university awarded 3,702 bachelor's degrees, 831 master's degrees, and 49 doctoral degrees, for a total of 4,582. White (1,312) and Hispanic (1,284) students represented the largest numbers of degree recipients. Undergraduate degrees in high-demand areas included Agriculture, Public Administration, Life Sciences, Nursing, Engineering, and Business and Professional Services, for a total of 1,878 degrees awarded in 2012-2013, or slightly more than half of the undergraduate degrees awarded in that year.

In fall 2012, there were 2,099 employees, with 71.1% full time and 28.9% part time; in fall 2014, there were 2,245, with 69.6% full time and 30.4% part time. Faculty comprised 59.3% of all employees in 2012 and 60.0% in 2014. The percentage of part-time faculty increased from 45.6% in 2012 to 48.1% in 2014. White faculty represented 68.1% of all faculty in 2012 and 65.6% in 2014; the percentage of Hispanic faculty increased from 10.5% to 11.8%, while

percentages of African-American and Asian/Pacific Islander faculty remained flat from 2010 to 2014. Only 43.0% of all faculty were tenured or tenure-track, and the dependence on the employment of part-time and adjunct faculty remained slightly higher than noted in the 2005 Commission Action Letter.

The strategic plan of 2005 shifted the campus mission to a more regional focus. This was echoed in the 2010 academic plan, which included plans to hire 35 new faculty members. Five new interdisciplinary areas were created under the plan: Health; Multiculturalism in The U.S.; Urban and Regional Transformation; Water Technology, Management, and Quality; and World Cultures and Globalization.

In July 2013, the president retired after 22 years of service. In 2014, President Castro was in his second year in office, and a number of changes in the senior leadership of the university had occurred between 2012 and 2014. A successful \$200 million fundraising campaign had achieved its goal and a new strategic plan was in place. During the strategic planning process, the president called on the campus community to “Be Bold!” and “Be Nice!” With adoption of these plans, the university had created a roadmap aligned with the priorities of the new administration.

Recent accreditation history

Fresno State was first accredited in 1954. The last commission action to reaffirm accreditation was in February 2005. At this time, the proposal for the two-stage comprehensive review was scheduled for May 15, 2011; the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) was scheduled for fall 2013 and the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) was scheduled for fall 2014. In July 2008, the CPR due date was changed to October 14, 2012. With the adoption of the 2013 WASC accreditation handbook and revised process, the CPR and EER visits were changed to an offsite review, scheduled for November 2014, and an onsite review (campus visit), approved by staff action in October 2013 and scheduled for October 2015.

This was followed by a number of substantive change committee actions between June of 2005 and May 2015, as well as three structural change panel actions. The proposal for a doctoral program in educational leadership (EdD, off-campus) was not accepted in October 2006; this action was followed by a visit to review the proposal in January 2007. The campus submitted a progress report in December 2008, which was followed by a request for more information. The report was received and accepted in December 2009, and the program was approved in December 2010 and ratified in January 2011.

Other programs approved through the substantive or structural change review processes were: a) Joint Doctorate in Forensic and Behavior Sciences and Joint Doctorate of Physical Therapy (with University of California Davis) in August, 2007; b) the EdS Psychology in May 2008; c) MA in Reading (Distance Education Program) in January, 2011; d) China 1+2+1, School of Agricultural Science and Technology (International Program) in January, 2011; e) Joint Nursing Degree Program (with San Jose State University, online) in January 2012; f) Master of Business Administration (online) in April 2012; g) Master of Arts in Communicative Disorders (online); Professional Science Masters (online), and Water Resource Management (online) in August 2013; h) Joint EdD in Educational Leadership with California State University Bakersfield; and, i) Joint Doctorate in Educational Leadership with California State University Channel Islands, July 2015.

In October 2012, Dr. Patricia Mitchell led a special visit to review the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at Fresno State (DPELFS). The special visit team commended the program's assessment plan, responsiveness to feedback, and availability of resources for faculty development, academic support services, and leadership role. The following areas were to be incorporated into the institutional report for the university's offsite review in November 2014:

revised dissertation rubrics, development of single conceptual framework, and faculty diversity plan.

Offsite Review

During November 19-20, 2014, an off-site review of Fresno State's institutional report was conducted in the WASC offices in Alameda, California. The team was chaired by Edward Ray, President of Oregon State University, with assistant chair Kathi A. Ketcheson, Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at Portland State University. Team members were Anita B. Enriquez, Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, University of Guam; Gary A. Miller, Adjunct Professor, Jabs School of Business, California Baptist University; and Patricia A. Mitchell, Chair, Department of Leadership Studies, University of San Francisco. Richard Winn, WSCUC Senior Vice President, provided support for the offsite review.

During December, the team finalized lines of inquiry that would guide the October 2015 visit and sent them to the campus. They were:

- Standard 1: How does Fresno State account for student achievement and how does the institution see this changing over time, particularly when the core competencies are fully implemented? What will be the metrics for student achievement?
- Standard 2: How are Fresno's lived philosophy, Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and core competencies aligned in the assessment process? What is the process for monitoring the decentralized methods currently in place for assessing core competencies? How are students, both undergraduate and graduate, made aware of and helped to achieve these outcomes?
- Standard 3: How are adjunct and part-time faculty engaged in the assessment and program review processes? How are these faculty treated, compared with tenure/track

faculty, with regard to compensation, contracts, benefits, and faculty development opportunities?

- Standard 4: How are the results of data collection and analysis used for improvement and decision making at Fresno State? How are individuals and units within the institution held accountable for results?

Fresno State prepared a response to the Lines of Inquiry and submitted it to the team in preparation for the visit. The response provided clarification and additional information that helped shape the team's understanding of the issues it raised in its initial review of the institutional report.

In January 2015, Richard Osborn, WSCUS Vice President, replaced Richard Winn as the accreditation process liaison, following Dr. Winn's retirement. The team thanked Dr. Winn for his support during the early phase of the review and welcomed Dr. Osborn during its preparations for October 2015 site visit.

B. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor

The institutional report was organized around the nine components of the review and provided data displays and supporting documents in an extensive set of appendices. Significant changes in leadership, organization, and focus from 2003 to 2013 were discussed in detail, as were the institution's responses to previous commission actions from the last review in 2004-2005. Each section noted the appropriate Criteria for Review (CFRs), or referenced the standards, directly. It appeared to the team that all constituents had been involved in the self-study process.

The report reflected Fresno State's efforts to address areas of improvement noted in the last accreditation review. In particular, the team noted that the university had documented progress in student success, with resulting data that revealed improvements in retention and

graduation rates. Comparisons among underserved minorities versus non-underserved minorities were clearly presented. The narrative provided evidence that the university was intentional in addressing gaps in assessment through annual review of assessment activities, and also had acknowledged the need to provide incentives for greater participation among the faculty in ongoing assessment activities. The university recognized the important role of deans in providing leadership for this work.

Strengths of the report included its discussion of strategic planning and the provision of institutional data. There was evidence that Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) reports were used effectively in decision-making. Institutional evaluation of student learning assessment processes through the Learning Assessment Teams (LAT) and subsequent reporting by the OIE director to relevant internal stakeholders and the provost provided support for institutional improvement through assessment.

The team found that Fresno State was intentional in its self-review, resulting in clear initiatives and timelines, such as the intended implementation of e-portfolios by fall 2016, recognition of need to increase faculty development opportunities (especially for adjunct faculty), and engagement of deans to provide incentives for assessment across all programs. The results of the external consultant's report on the Student Outcomes Assessment Plans (SOAPs) yielded recommendations that the institution intended to pursue. The team anticipated that the new executive administration team would ensure stability and progress efforts through renewed strategic planning.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1. Response to Issues Raised in Previous Commission Actions and Reviews

In the Action Letter dated March 2, 2005, the Commission recommended that the university address four areas: 1) conduct a review of its mission to define more explicitly its mission and aspirations and its “place” within the higher education community; 2) develop an academic plan; 3) clarify faculty expectations for research and teaching; and, 4) strengthen assessment of student learning in general education and university-wide. The institutional report provided specific narratives on each of these areas (pgs. 11 – 19).

The team noted that the university had addressed concerns about its mission and aspirations, in part by stepping away from the goal of becoming a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, as stated in its 2006-2011 strategic plan. The focus on “scholarly research, service, and engagement,” as described in the most recent strategic plan, appeared to the team to be more achievable and more appropriate to Fresno State’s identity and role in the region. The Academic Plan was available online and was focused on learning, scholarship, and engagement. There were two other areas of concern, however, that the team felt needed additional work and better-developed plans for improvement: more consistency in assessment activities, both in general education and university-wide, with outcomes and expectations made clearer to students; and, the role and expectations for part-time faculty, particularly in program review and assessment.

The team noted an omission to the Fresno State institutional report: following the special visit to review the DPELFS in October 2012, the Commission asked that a response to several areas of concern be incorporated into the institutional report for the university’s offsite review in November 2014. The three areas (noted earlier in this report) were: revised dissertation rubrics, development of single conceptual framework, and faculty diversity. These do not appear to have been included in the document. During the 2015 site visit, Dr. Patricia Mitchell conducted

interviews with the dean and key faculty and staff and reviewed documents during the site visit.

Her report is contained in appendix C of this report.

Component 2. Compliance with the Standards and Federal Requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Through its review of the Fresno State institutional report, the team found that the university had demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standards. In the document, the relevant CFRs appeared at the beginning of each section of the report and were followed by reflective and analytical narratives that addressed the Standards. The team did not find substantial gaps, nor did it note substantial concerns about compliance, or campus plans, for areas needing improvement. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (institutional report, appendix 2-2) was provided as a series of links to the Fresno State website, each corresponding to a specific CFR. Links led to relevant documents, policies, or forms provided a compendium of information addressing the Standards. The worksheet, “Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements” (included in appendix 2-2), provided Fresno State’s self-evaluation on each of the CFRs, with scores ranging from 1 to 3. While most areas received a rating of “1,” indicating an area of strength, or something done well, 7 were rated between “1” and “2,” 8 were rated “2,” one was rated between “2” and “3,” and two were rated “3,” indicating a need for improvement.

The areas receiving a rating of “3” were: 1) requirements and levels of student achievement required for graduation, as well as a coherent philosophy that guides degree processes and ensures quality (CFR2.2); and, 2) student learning outcomes at every level and reflected in programs, policies, and curricula, aligned with other areas of the campus that support

learning (CFR 2.3). The area rated between “2” and “3” was evidence of achievement of learning outcomes by every graduate and faculty use of outcomes to evaluate student work. (CFR 2.6.)

Fresno State acknowledged these areas in its institutional report and discussed actions underway to address them. On page 23, Fresno State listed them among 8 areas that “needed to be addressed or improved.” Additional areas mentioned in this list were: strengthening the definition of “values and character” in the university mission statement; developing an explicit focus on information literacy; developing assessment of general education at the program level; and, expanding the concept of faculty development to include increased attention on part-time faculty. The team found that the campus had addressed these areas in its institutional report, including plans for improvement.

The appendices to the accreditation team’s report include the Federal Compliance Forms. Apart from comments regarding the need for more data on online students, as noted in appendix B, the team found Fresno State in compliance with federal requirements.

Component 3. Defining the Meaning of Degrees: Ensuring Their Quality and Rigor

Attention to educational quality was found to be a significant aspect of academic life at Fresno State. While efforts were made to ensure that graduates met or exceeded desired characteristics in some areas, the team found that additional work remained to be done. For instance, the university had responded to a line of inquiry about measuring student competencies and metrics by saying, “Students are successful to the extent that they: 1) earn their degree, and, 2) are prepared for life after college including multiple jobs/careers/experiences, and become productive members of society.” The response mentioned some measures (persistence and graduation rates, student involvement in research, internships, and employment), but also stated that measures of core competencies, involvement on campus and graduate or alumni surveys

either were under development, or need further clarification. It appeared to the team that additional attention to these areas was needed, and also was being addressed.

Fresno State presented evidence of a wide-array of programs, systems, processes, and methods that attempted to understand and verify student success. Some of the methods utilized had been in place more than ten years (Qualities Desired of Graduating Students, or QDOGS) while others were still in development (e-portfolios). Additionally, much effort had been expended to include assessment of desired outcomes through surveys, data gathering and analysis, and program assessments. It appeared to the team that the university was committed to enhancing student learning through systematic processes commonly used across the broader arena of higher education.

The Academic Plan included appropriate goals and strategies to advance the academic programs and, subsequently, student learning. The analytics section of the plan was strong, as reflected in the wide array of OIE Reports that included comparisons with similar institutions and use of data and analysis for institutional improvement. Again, in some instances the analysis was cursory (for example, Department of Theater Arts), while in other areas of analysis it was robust (for example, Promoting Student Success). The team suggested that the campus focus on the following: How do these reports influence institutional/academic improvement? How are these reports processed and used by faculty and academic administration? (CFR 3.10.)

The team agreed that Fresno State had done good work in identifying and linking the ILOs to its undergraduate programs. The process to achieve this milestone involved a broad spectrum of faculty, staff, and students. Faculty, together with other stakeholders, identified overarching domains of learning and the levels of proficiency represented by the degree, and then developed a multi-year sustainable plan that articulated when and how these domains and levels of proficiency were to be assessed. Curriculum and outcomes matrices clearly specified

where program goals and learning outcomes were expected to be achieved and measured. (CFR 3.5.)

The ILOs were applied campus-wide at the undergraduate level, allowing for robust assessment. OIE reports informed the community about student progress and success. They covered a wide spectrum of areas, including demographic enrollment trends (applicants, headcounts, diversity, retention and graduation rates, and class size); assessment of learning; annual reports; general education outcomes; program reviews; principles of good practice; and, assessments of special programs (First-Year Experience, Academic Success Course, and Honors Program). OIE also produced reports covering non-academic areas, such as student services and community service.

Graduate education. One area that appeared to need further development was graduate education. (CFR2.2.) Graduate degrees appeared to be well-developed and broadly defined to “ultimately improve the quality of life for all citizens of our vast, economically challenged, and historically underserved service area,” but they lacked a set of common institutional outcomes. The team acknowledged the efforts of the many academic leaders and faculty who created and assessed the set of well-developed programs of academic study that met the rigors of graduate education and attainment. However, additional work was needed to determine general competencies and skills related to graduate degree attainment.

Data on institutional effectiveness. OIE produced a host of reports to inform the community about student progress and success. These reports covered a wide spectrum of areas, including data trends on student demographics (applicants, headcounts, diversity, graduation rates, retention, and class size), assessment of learning (SOAP annual reports, general education outcomes, program reviews, principles of good practices), assessments of special programs

(First-Year Experience, Academic Success Course, Honors Program). OIE also produced reports about non-academic areas, such as student services and community service.

In the institutional report, Fresno State noted that it “...embraces the practice of using data for decision making purposes,” indicating significant use of data to enhance student learning. The team verified these statements through review of the OIE webpage and through on-campus interviews with leaders and stakeholders. For example, as part of the program review process, action plans were produced and submitted to the dean and provost and then discussed by the provost, deans, assistant deans, and department chairpersons. On many occasions, these discussions led to proposals for resource allocation. It appeared to the team that these interactions were conducted in a collegial atmosphere with all parties able to make suggestions for improvement. The team acknowledged that the amount of data generated for assessment of institutional effectiveness was impressive, but it wanted to see more evidence of how these data were used to enhance student learning. There was some evidence of this in the institutional report, but more was needed.

Fresno State had done a good job of assessing educational effectiveness on many levels. It appeared to the team that extensive effort had been expended to identify institutional goals and strategies, student learning outcomes, and student success, and to gather data to assess them. In particular, OIE led the charge in informing university leadership of the outcomes associated with strategic and academic goals. (CFR 4.2, 4.3, 4.4.) In addition, the university had invested in continuous learning about educational effectiveness. Individual and institutional knowledge of assessment practices continued to be expanded through attendance at workshops and conferences. Educational opportunities for faculty and academic leaders were provided on campus, as well, through workshops, online courses, and training sessions. (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4.)

Fresno State demonstrated efforts to uncover and internalize some of the challenges that it faced. These were listed in the institutional report as *Emergent Areas and Analysis* (p. 56). Key issues included:

- Frequent requests for postponement of program review;
- Limited faculty participation in program review, particularly preparation of the self-study, which may or may not include the department chair; and,
- The requirement that programs with external program accreditation complete both external and internal processes.

The university was keenly aware of areas that needed attention and had undertaken efforts to address them. The team suggested that the university continue its review and analysis to improve program review and assessment process across the campus.

Component 4. Educational Quality: Student learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation

Learning outcomes. In 2006, the president called for the creation of a task force to define the qualities of an undergraduate education at Fresno State. The task force recommended a university-wide “lived philosophy” of Achievement, Ethics, and Engagement. Campus-wide forums engaged faculty, students, and external constituents in developing ILOs that addressed the mission statement’s goals for engagement, diversity, internationalization, distinction, and ethics. (CFR 2.10.) Specific to general education were the core competencies of Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and Written Communication, which were based on the Association of American Colleges & University’s (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) framework of essential learning outcomes. (CFR 2.7, 4.3, 4.6.) A review of task force meeting minutes indicated that there was a planned structure for assessment of the core competencies. (CFR 2.4, 4.1, 4.3.)

The team found that assessment of ILOs focused on demonstration of the lived philosophy, achievement of broad integrative knowledge and intellectual skills reflected in the core competencies, specialized knowledge acquired in the major field of study, and application of knowledge demonstrated by the product of an applied project. (CFR 2.10, 4.3.) While ILOs had been identified, the team found that they had not been fully implemented in all degree programs.

E-portfolios and core competencies. In 2008, the task force recommended adoption of an e-portfolio system through which students could demonstrate how they satisfied the combination of lived philosophy, ILOs, general education (GE) core competencies, and program learning outcomes. While the recommendation for adoption of e-portfolios was made in 2008, it was not until December 2013 that the university chose Pathbrite as a platform. It was noted in the institutional report that the recommendations "...were not implemented [in 2008], largely because the university could not settle on an e-portfolio platform that could deliver what was needed for usability, accessibility, and assessment work (p.25)." (CFR 2.4.)

Implementation in selected courses began during spring 2014 and the e-portfolio implementation team developed an action plan to require all entering students in fall 2016 to create and maintain an e-portfolio. (CFR 2.1, 2.3.) Through interviews with faculty, the team was informed that implementation of the e-portfolio had been postponed until fall 2017, in order to follow faculty senate approval processes. A pilot program was launched in the History department in spring 2014 to explore the use of e-portfolios for program-level assessment; following this, other departments had begun to show interest. It was anticipated that this approach would facilitate the more direct and continuous engagement of faculty in student learning.

In spring 2013, Fresno State conducted an evaluation of writing among its undergraduate students. Some key findings were:

- 71% of writing samples and 94% of writing exams were rated at the “Competent” or “Accomplished” levels of competency;
- Of the five areas of evaluation, Academic Conversation and Assessment-Judgment Capacity were rated as “weak;” and,
- Students performed best in the area of Language Effectiveness in both samples. (CFR 2.4, 2.6.)

Graduate programs. It appeared to the team that there were no agreed-upon criteria to assess graduate programs. (CFR 2.2b.) The University Graduate Committee (UGC) had discussed a set of common outcomes expected of graduate degree programs that would be included in the next academic plan. Graduate program standing presumed core competencies and the field specialized knowledge that comes with an undergraduate degree, but specific graduate program outcome expectations were set within individual programs. (CFR 2.4.) There was some evidence from among Fresno State graduates on the reliability of the baccalaureate degree to attest to potential outcomes at the graduate level. During the period 2009-2012, 168 Fresno State graduates entered doctoral programs in the U.S. and abroad. Those students included 90 in the life sciences, 17 in the social sciences, and 61 in other disciplines.

Standards of performance at graduation. A review of the evidence suggested that Fresno State’s comprehensive strategy to evaluate the five core competencies was tied to the strategic planning theme of improving educational quality, and also was tied to program SOAPs. (CFR 2.13.) The following steps and instruments were proposed for core competency evaluations:

- An institutional requirement for core competency assessment and program review;

- Continued development and enrichment of SOAPs;
 - Development of instruments for core competency evaluation; and,
 - Achieving 83% of programs and departments with a capstone course in which students near graduation demonstrate their cumulative experience and learning.
- (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.1.)

Component 5. Student Success: Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation

Fresno State addressed student learning as an integral part of student success toward retention and degree completion, with initiatives and interventions provided to address students' unique needs and challenges. Broad-based approaches included strategies such as faculty development and curricula redesign, as well as more discipline-specific initiatives related to engaging curriculum and high impact practices, such as internships, work experiences, and interactions with industry employers. (CFR 2.7, 2.13.) Student success was defined through increases in its 4th, 5th, and 6th year graduation rates and increased 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year retention rates that would lead to improved graduation rates.

The commitment to student success was evident at the leadership level of the institution, through its president and strategic plan. Fresno State's president articulated his definition of student success through a video summary of strategies for improvement, which included strengthening activities to ensure timely completion of course work and increasing the graduation rate by six percent in 2015. (CFR 1.2, CFR 2.7.) This was reinforced through the strategic plan, which outlined seven important themes, including the following: Theme 1- Enhance the Student Learning Environment and Theme 2: Commitment to Student Transformation and Success. (CFR 4.7.) The following goals and actions were identified as institution-level initiatives to ensure or improve student success for the period 2012 to 2015: 1) reduce by 50 percent the gap in six-year freshmen and transfers graduation rates between

traditional and under-represented students; 2) increase by 6 percentage points (45% baseline from Graduation Rate Initiative) the six-year first-time, full-time freshman graduation rates; 3) rank in the top 25 percent of Public Carnegie Engaged Universities; 4) render admission decisions within 60 days; and, 5) increase the percentage of new freshmen satisfying remediation through their high school senior experiences before enrolling at Fresno State. The university made provisions to reach these goals through initiatives such as the “Four-Year Graduation Plan,” requiring high-school students who had taken entrance examinations for English and mathematics to go through remediation education prior to entering as freshmen, academic support and student services, and intentional monitoring and tracking of retention and graduation rates. (CFR 1.2, 1.6.)

Embedded in the university’s culture was the notion that “success is realized by an organized, concerted effort to engage students in transformative processes of learning and personal development that leads to successful student outcomes.” Indicators of student success and educational quality, beyond improved retention and graduation rates, included increased number of students involved in scholarship and creative projects outside their regular coursework; quality of student scholarship and creative projects (judged by external awards, publications, and presentations); increased pass rate and course GPA of students in redesigned courses; improved senior and value-added CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) test scores; and higher percentage of seniors engaged in enriching educational experience than that of Fresno State’s Carnegie peer group. In particular, one of the student learning initiatives that exemplifies Fresno State’s commitment to learning was service-learning courses offered across the curriculum and activities related to service in campus organizations. The team suggested that Fresno State consider how a student’s e-portfolio will align student success outcomes with the ILOs. Fresno State’s efforts in engagement and service learning, as reflected in its articulated

contributions to the public good (appendix 1-3), presented additional opportunities for alignment of relevant outcomes that would yield personal and professional success for every student. (CFR 2.11.)

Academic support and student services. A highly-developed infrastructure appeared to be in place to strengthen student success. Academic support systems, including financial support information, were made available through the website under “Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.” Fresno State’s “Continuum of Promoting Student Success and Transfer Student Graduation Plan” presented the various activities and interventions available to ensure persistence to degrees for entering freshmen and for matriculating transfer students. (CFR 2.10, 2.13, 2.14.) Several initiatives and interventions, such as improvement of gateway course curricula, learning communities, early intervention, and a summer bridge program, provided examples of how student services have supported student success and student learning. There appeared to be dedicated resources to fund major initiatives, such as supplemental instruction, early learning, and learning-community programs. (CFR 2.9, 2.10.)

Fresno State used a number of data collection tools and methods for analysis, including National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Commitment to Latina/o Academic Success and Excellence (CLASE). Funded through a Title V grant, the CLASE program enabled faculty training on course curricula redesign, particularly for high failure rate and gatekeeper courses. This proved successful for a biology general education course, resulting in an internal pass rate from 64.7% to 86.5%. (CFR 2.9, 4.3, 4.4.) Further, through its “Mandatory Advising Checkpoint,” the university kept track of when students visited an advisor, declared a major, and filed a graduation plan; participation was enforced through a registration hold. These were transparent in the online university catalog, which included a roadmap sequencing of courses. (CFR 2.10, 2.12, 2.13.) Disaggregated data by Pell grant, first-generation status,

underrepresented minority status, and college and major were used in making decisions related to targeted interventions of students “at-risk” for student advising and other student support interventions. (CFR 4.3.)

Retention and graduation rates. The Student Support Task Force (SSTF) and the Graduation Rate Initiative Team (GRIT), collaborative efforts between the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs, were charged to engage in cohort tracking of retention and graduation and to conduct graduate rate studies. The OIE director served on both teams, providing necessary data as needed. The SSTF, comprised of administrators, faculty, staff, and student representatives from all disciplines and administrative units, was formed to assess retention strategies on campus, research best practices, and design a series of initiatives and interventions that focused on improving student retention and graduation rates for all students. (CFR 2.5, 4.3.) An additional layer of support was made possible during every student’s 2nd year of enrollment through graduation, with the support of data and reports from the OIE. Here, college and school deans and department chairs were required to intervene with at-risk students identified through the student cohort performance, which was tracked and monitored by the OIE. (CFR 2.10, 2.13, 2.14.) A positive effect of support programs on fall 2003, 2004, and 2005 freshmen cohorts were stronger retention rates across four years. Five to six-year graduation rates also were higher across the three cohort years. (CFR 2.10.)

The Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) recognized Fresno State in its “Most Visible Progress Award Exemplary Program” in 2013, based on the Project Degree Completion initiative that addressed the Obama administration’s national goal of boosting college completion between 2013 and 2025. Data provided in the self-study indicated that retention had improved since fall 2007 and that four-year graduation rates had increased since fall 2005. OIE tracked and monitored student cohort performance and identified at-risk factors of

cohort students. Its reports provided historical data on retention, graduation, and time to degree across four to nine years, by cohort year, which were available for public view on its site. (CFR 1.2.)

As a designated minority-serving institution, Fresno State specifically tracked student success for URM students. Since the launch of the CSU “Graduation Initiative: Closing the Achievement Gap in Fall 2009,” the university pledged to increase six-year graduation rates from 45 to 51 percent and to cut the achievement gap between under-served and non-underserved groups by half (14.0% to 7.0%). As a result of its various Special Support Programs (SSPs), the URM graduation rate showed improvement from 38.0% to 41.0% in 2011. (CFR 4.3.)

OIE produced analytics and research studies that included comparisons of URM versus Non-URM students. One of OIE’s studies revealed that URM students complete a bachelor’s degree within 6, 7, and 8 years, with support from programs such as Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). OIE also tracked co-curricular activities that supported learning and development. Student success through student achievement was presented through the number of those accepted into graduate programs, the number of URM students receiving aid, engagement of URM students in leadership boards or activities, the number of URM students in leadership boards/activities, the number of URM students receiving undergraduate research aid, and those appearing on president’s and deans’ lists. Consistent institutionalized efforts and funding kept the university on target for reducing the achievement gap between Non-URM and URM graduation rates, as well as effectuating student success long term at Fresno State. (CFR 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13.)

Component 6. Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data and Evidence

Program Review. A CSU-mandated review process governed adoption of new programs at Fresno State. Proposed programs were placed on a master plan that had to be approved by the CSU Board of Trustees. Faculty within the proposed program provided a detailed program description, which was approved at the department, college or school, and university levels. Separate university committees approved undergraduate and graduate programs. New courses and changes in existing courses followed the university review process, but did not have to be approved at the system level. (CFR 4.1.)

All academic programs were scheduled for a comprehensive review every five to seven years. Reviews were used to evaluate and improve programs according to criteria that were last updated in 2010. There was some evidence that not all programs had been reviewed in a timely fashion, but there was a commitment to have every program on a seven-year cycle. Review teams consisted of an external reviewer, another from outside the program, and a third from inside the program. According to the process, this team would review the self-study and provide feedback to the provost and dean, who in turn would provide feedback to the program. The program would then develop an action plan to be reviewed by the provost and dean. Annual reports were provided by the program to the provost regarding actions taken in response to the approved plans. (CFR 2.10, 2.7.)

Program-level assessment. Every undergraduate and graduate program stated program-level student learning outcomes and developed a SOAP, using a common template. (CFR 2.4.) A central review of assessment efforts was undertaken each summer by the LAT and assessment coordinators in all departments, colleges, and schools. This process ensured that SOAPs were being used and that data were collected and acted on to improve learning outcomes. The results of the LAT reviews were discussed and shared with the assessment coordinators, department

chairs, and deans. The LAT also served in a consulting capacity to mentor program and department coordinators and faculty regarding SOAP revisions. (CFR 2.3.)

All educational programs (undergraduate and graduate) appeared to have program-based learning outcomes. (CFR 2.3.) Through SOAPs, most departments had established a range of viable assessment activities and many appeared to be using the results of assessment positively. (CFR 2.4.) Protocols had been drafted to begin assessing the ILOs through the e-portfolio system when it was finally implemented. The team's review of some programs revealed extensive program outcomes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Some were quite advanced, including assessment matrices and timelines for assessment. Others did not include elaborate models (although a SOAP template was provided for all), but it appeared that all were focused on some measure of assessing program outcomes on a regular basis. (CFR 2.6.)

As noted in the institutional report, some work remained to be done: "Finally, a need to ensure learning outcomes dovetail with the university mission and that a "Culture of Quality" embodies a commitment to the integrity and quality of every degree." In 2008, the university hired an institutional research specialist in response to the Commission's concern to improve the university's institutional capacity to make data-driven decisions regarding the effectiveness of programs. (CFR 4.2.)

Component 7. Sustainability: Financial viability, Preparing for The Changing Higher Education Environment

Institutional capacity. As noted earlier in this report, Fresno State had experienced changes in leadership since January 2012, with seven new appointments at the executive level. The team noted, however, that the transitions were smooth and orderly. (CFR 3.7.) Documentation of the integrity, performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability of university leadership was found in Appendices 7.1 and 7.2 to the institutional report and through

the team's search of the university website. The team noted that enough information was provided to confirm that all was in order. (CFR 3.6.)

Fresno State operated with a basic administrative structure that included a president and four vice presidents (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Advancement, and Administrative Service). The athletic director also was listed as a member of the president's cabinet. An independent governing board (25 member Board of Trustees) was in place and functioned within guidelines established by state law. (CFR 3.8, 3.9.)

The strategic plan and information technology plan supported institutional sustainability. In addition, a ten-year development plan focused attention on future needs for facilities. These plans provided guidance and accountability for strategic and innovative aspirations and leadership to the academic community, but also served as models for other institutions within the CSU. The team noted, particularly, Fresno State's leadership in initiatives established to improve effectiveness and efficiencies across administrative functions. These efforts were laudable and appeared to be greatly appreciated throughout the entire CSU. (CFR 3.5, 3.7, 4.6, 4.7.)

The team found that graduate programs had sufficient fiscal, physical, information, technology resources, and structures to sustain them. (CFR 3.5.)

Technology resources. The information technology plan offered a video introducing its initiatives and included snapshots of students and faculty in action. Among the areas of focus introduced in the plan were analytics, creation of learning spaces, and enhanced services. The university provided training and support for faculty members in using technology in instruction. It was engaged in discussions at the national level through organizations such as APLU regarding the role technology plays in shaping the classroom of the future, expanding hybrid course possibilities, and on-line learning opportunities and competition. Plans were in place to acquire equipment needed to accommodate the new technologies in instruction and advising, as

well as to hire new faculty and staff comfortable working with social media and other tools increasingly used by incoming students. (CFR 3.5, 4.7.)

Financial viability. Fresno State, like all of California's public universities, had experienced dramatic declines in state appropriations over the previous 15 years, and particularly in the most recent five years. The declines were less crippling for Fresno State than for some other universities, perhaps because enrollment remained fairly constant. Fresno State had functioned without an operational deficit for at least three years. (CFR 3.4.)

The university relied primarily on state appropriations and in-state tuition to meet its revenue needs. Reductions in state support, however, had been substantial. Fresno State's audited financial statements revealed that the governor had reduced the overall fiscal year 2012 budget for the CSU by 24%. Over a ten year period from 2002 to 2012, student tuition and fees at Fresno State increased from \$34.6 million to \$108.4 million. This was the major source for growth in the general fund budget from \$162.3 million to \$215.5 million over this period. The cost to students to attend Fresno State rose from \$970 per semester in 2002-2003 to \$3,144 in 2012-2013, an increase of 245%. Recently, however, the governor had directed state higher education institutions not to ask for substantial increases in in-state tuition and fees in the near future.

A successful \$200 million fundraising campaign helped the university pursue its priorities in the face of state funding cuts, but there was no clear evidence provided in the institutional report of a sustained fundraising effort. Given the historic role of the university in serving students from historically under-represented groups and lower social economic circumstances, a sustained fundraising effort could pose a challenge. In recent years, the university had been effective in securing competitive, outside grants at \$35 million per year, and much of that money was used to help at-risk student populations. In 2012-2013, 113 of 281

grants valued at \$13.8 million funded projects to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups. Partnerships with community colleges and high schools promoted access and student cost reduction efforts included a program to recycle books, rather than require them to buy new ones. (CFR 4.7.)

Fresno State was well-served by a conservative approach to managing its endowment and by budgeting, ranking among the most efficient universities within the CSU. The budget allocation process was guided by the strategic and academic plans. The budget was well-managed, with some funds held centrally for strategic investments. In the academic units, deans managed their allocations in accordance with their own strategic plans, which were aligned with the university plan. (CFR 3.4.)

Planning. The strategic plan was comprehensive, encompassing a wide range of areas, including: enhancing student learning, innovative scholarship, engagement in the region, and internationalization. Seven themes focused community attention on enhancing and improving the future of Fresno State. Progress reports on the themes were supplied, although they varied in level of depth and analysis provided. In this plan, Fresno State refreshed its mission statement, supported by a vision that focused on “student transformation and overall quality of life in the region and beyond,” as stated in the *Strategic Plan for Excellence IV (2011-15)*. (CFR 4.6.)

Quality assurance. In its review, the team noted that the ILOs were not readily identifiable in the undergraduate catalog. Most degree programs provided learning outcomes, but they were not readily visible for all programs. Success was based on 4-5 and 6-year graduation rates, which had resulted from improved retention rates. Retention and graduation efforts, such as advising for second year students and beyond, were decentralized to the department level. The OIE tracked and monitored student cohort performance and identified at-risk factors of

cohort students. A report on at-risk students was shared with the campus community. (CFR 2.10.)

Operational integrity and sound business practices. The Board of Trustees exercised active oversight of the university. (CFR 3.5.) The university's shared governance model, including the Academic Senate, played a critical role in operations and in decision-making. Audits occurred at the CSU level and were submitted with the Annual Report. (CFR 3.7. 3.9.)

The policy on academic freedom for faculty and students was available on the campus website, within the "Disruptive Classroom Behavior" section of "About Student Affairs." The mission and core values were explicit, embracing a culture of diversity and respect for difference. An institutional culture of diversity was articulated through the president's statement to the Commission on Human Relations and Equity (PCHRE), which supported acceptance and fairness at all levels of the university. (CFR 3.1, 3.10.)

Timely and fair responses to complaints. Explicit guidelines for reporting student complaints were contained in the online undergraduate catalog under the Student Complaint Procedure section of "Policies." This included two types of complaint reporting procedures, one for violation of academic program policy and accrediting standards (to WASC) and the other for alleged violations of a state law, including laws prohibiting fraud and false advertising. Fresno State publicized students' ability to report complaints directly to WASC regarding the university's compliance with academic program quality and accreditation standards. (CFR 1.7.)

Faculty and staff. Of the 1,244 faculty members employed in 2012, 677 (54.4%) were full-time. As noted earlier, this meant that Fresno State was heavily dependent on adjunct faculty for instruction. Full-time adjuncts with a three-year contract were hired to compliment the full-time tenured faculty. While this structure supported Fresno State's mission and its students, it was clear that issues around part-time faculty remained a concern. (CFR 3.1.)

Staffing plans were assessed by the deans, annually. A review of the evidence suggested that Fresno State employed faculty with the requisite academic qualifications and background to achieve its objectives. (CFR 3.2.) Ninety-six percent of tenured faculty members held doctoral or other terminal degrees in their area of study. (CFR 3.1.) Practices relevant to faculty and staff recruitment, workload, merit, and evaluation appeared appropriate and well-aligned with Fresno State's mission and objectives. (CFR 3.3.) Faculty evaluation processes were systematic, with well-defined policies and procedures. Fresno State also engaged in systems of support, development, and evaluation for adjunct and part-time faculty. (CFR 3.3.)

Curricular decisions were the responsibility of the Fresno State faculty. The team noted that the faculty worked effectively with the administration to achieve the educational objectives. (CFR 3.11.) According to an Academic Senate policy, the faculty had responsibility and authority over student and program assessment within their own disciplines. Both full-time and adjunct faculty were engaged in assessment, program review, and faculty development. (CFR 3.3.) The position of program assessment coordinator was filled by a tenure or tenure-track faculty member, who conducted the annual program assessment. All departments and colleges submitted annual assessment reports to LAT. (CFR 2.4.)

Component 9. Reflection and Plans for Improvement

In the concluding chapter of its institutional report, Fresno State summarized the findings and results of its self-examination and reflection, and identified successes, challenges, and areas needing improvement. Many of these matched with the team's findings, including the university's success in establishing a structure for assessment of student learning, its development of extensive data dashboards and reporting through OIE, its commitment to diversity, and its robust strategic planning process. Challenges identified both by Fresno State and the team included consistent implementation of student learning outcomes at the program

and institution levels, the impending implementation of an e-portfolio platform, and the need to define and assess the meaning, quality, and integrity of graduate degrees.

The team found Fresno State reflective and analytical in its approach to the institutional report and acknowledged its commitment to addressing areas needing further attention. Nevertheless, the team was concerned about the ability of the university to bring all of its efforts to completion. Having adopted an e-portfolio platform in 2013, implementation was again postponed until fall 2017. Program reviews were required of all programs, yet not all programs were following a regular schedule. Questions remained about the participation of the university's large population of adjunct faculty in program reviews.

Assessments of the core competencies for writing and critical thinking had been piloted at the time of the visit, with information literacy next in line, and the other competencies were scheduled for implementation in May 2016. The campus had discussed the need to embed core competencies in academic programs, and to demonstrate that outcomes are achieved, but the process had been continuing for some time and metrics to be used as measures of success remained undefined. In this area, the team suggests that that Fresno strengthen mechanisms to hold programs and their leaders accountable for results.

The team noted that Fresno State had made an exceptional effort to collect and analyze data and to provide reports to the administration and to individual programs. It was not clear whether or not the analysis was being kept current, so the team suggested that all OIE reports should be dated, and also that they be updated on a regular schedule. In addition, the team felt it would be helpful to post program review reports on the OIE website.

The financial position of the university appeared to be stable. The team noted the university's success in completing its \$200 million fundraising campaign, but it did not see evidence that fundraising had become a continuous part of the financial planning effort of the

university. The team suggested that the university prepare five-year budget forecasts and also recommended that it consider developing a business plan to accompany the strategic plan.

The issue of part-time faculty participation in decision making was brought to the team's attention during the campus visit. The president and provost discussed plans for increasing "tenure density" in the near future, but it was clear to the team that part-time instructors would continue to play a major role in delivering courses and programs. While part-time faculty who met with the team during the campus visit expressed confidence in the administration, there were indications that many were dissatisfied with their role in major campus initiatives, such as strategic planning and program review. Some remarked that the campus culture discouraged their full participation in departmental decisions and in other important decisions or activities that affected them. The team suggested that Fresno State focus special attention on the concerns of part-time faculty, considering that they account for nearly half of its teaching faculty.

SECTION III – EVALUATION OF ELECTRONIC EXHIBIT PORTFOLIO

Data and metrics. Fresno State had made significant progress towards utilizing electronic exhibits for quality assurance and data-driven decision making. (CFR 3.7.) Of special note was the implementation of dashboard system using the software program “Tableau,” which the campus identified as a “game changer.” OIE provided leadership in creating, gathering, collating, and analyzing data for broad distribution and improvement. Reports from this system were used widely by the campus community. Review reports and data sets provided to the team revealed a broad base of information that would allow university leaders to drill down deeply into evidence for improvement or further study, or to identify places where change needed to occur. (CFR 3.7, 4.2, 4.3.) Examples of the reports included:

- At Risk Factors for First-Time Freshmen.
- Graduation Rates and the Achievement Gap.
- First Generation Students.
- Do Students Learn What Faculty Teach?

Also, OIE had recently purchased a license for the Qualtrics Survey Research Suite to support online surveys. The purchase was intended to improve survey utilization across the campus.

Use of data reports depended on the type of report being accessed, the number of viewers, and the number of distinct users. As expected, reports related to enrollment, retention, persistence, and demographics were high on the utilization list. Those viewing these data were clustered in the admissions and student development areas. What remained unclear was the amount of utilization by academic leaders and faculty within academic colleges, programs, and departments. The campus provided broad statements regarding effectiveness of results in monitoring faculty practices and measuring student success. (CFR 4.2.)

Overall, it appeared that quality assurance processes were in place at Fresno State, with all data, assessment reports, and program review reports displayed on the OIE website. The website demonstrated a substantial effort by the university to consolidate data collection and analysis, present data and metrics through clear visual presentations, and provide resources to faculty in monitoring progress in student assessment. Its website was easy to find on the university's home page. It was well-organized and the sections were clearly labeled for ease in searching. Throughout the sections, however, the team felt that the site would be improved if each report, survey, or study included a date. This also would help users understand the timeliness and currency of the information and reports. For example, in the section under Reports, Surveys & Studies, entitled "About OIE," it was unclear how much recent research in this area had resulted in a report. Under "Retention & Graduation," for example, the most recent reports available at this time of this writing were *Fresno State 6-year Undergrad Graduation Rates by Department* (Sept. 2012), which was three years old, and *Characterization of 3rd Year Students Who Graduate or Fail to Graduate in 6 Years* (June 2011), which was over five years old. On the other hand, under "OIE Briefs," the report entitled *Supplemental Instruction and Its Effect on Student Performance* (September 2014) was current, clear, succinct, and informative. The team felt that this report could serve as a model for others.

The dashboard of metrics found in the "Data" section was current as of fall 2014. It was user-friendly and allowed for trend analysis and drill down. Easy to read charts allowed users to see trends at a glance and to access additional information chronologically by hovering over the graph's line. The team suggested that adding subtotal and grand total lines on tables that report data on subgroups of populations would allow for quicker analysis and understanding of complex data. Additional information on all employee groups, not just faculty, also would be helpful.

Assessment and program review information. Assessment at Fresno State was linked to program reviews. The program review process appeared to be consistent, but because each program's annual report to the provost was not posted on the OIE site, it was difficult for the team to confirm this. Departments had posted most of their SOAPs online. This also facilitated faculty sharing of assessment resources and expertise. The SOAPs span a period of more than 10 years, which meant that some programs may not have been updated since 2005. Plan dates varied by college and schools, with dates ranging from March 2005 to September 2015. The team suggested that OIE might consider providing a "Date Last Updated" for each program.

Each college within the university described its own faculty's commitment to assessment and improvement in educational effectiveness. As expected, there was wide variation in both commitment and activity, which appeared to be driven by the pressures normally associated with institutional accreditation. Also noted was the apparent commitment of full-time faculty and full-time lecturers in the assessment process. Expectations for part-time faculty participation were much lower, although a few departments required part-time faculty to be engaged in the process. However, since Fresno State relied heavily on part-time faculty, it would be important to engage them more fully in the assessment process.

Whether on the OIE site or another, the team suggested that there should be specific reports of improved outcomes, and specific measures of those improvements, by individuals and cohorts of students, programs, and academic units that could be traced back to interactions with OIE. The university should ask the "So what?" question and provide qualitative and quantitative information to provide an answer.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team applauded Fresno State for its efforts in developing a reflective institutional report that included wide involvement by the campus community. The university's timely response to additional data requests and its answers to the many questions posed by individual team members was also greatly appreciated.

It was clear to the team that Fresno State had weathered the recent financial storm associated with a dramatic decline in state appropriations for the general fund. Audit findings confirmed that the university was well managed. Policies and practices were in place to assure that new programs and courses and course changes preserved the quality and integrity of degrees and course offerings. Learning outcomes were in place for all undergraduate programs, and the university was committed to developing common learning outcome metrics for its doctoral programs.

Commendations and Recommendations.

Commendations:

1. The team commended Fresno State for its disciplined focus on its mission as a community-engaged, regional university dedicated to providing baccalaureate and advanced degree opportunities to all students, especially to those from disadvantaged circumstances. (CFR 3.10.)
2. The team commends the leadership team for creating an open and inclusive planning process. (CFR 4.6.)
3. The team commended Fresno State for improving the overall 6-year graduation rate from 48.6% to 58.4% in two years, and for closing the achievement gap for subgroups of non-traditional students. The strong collaboration of academic affairs

- and student support services provided high-touch services that contributed to student success for all segments of the student population. (CFR 2.10, 2.13.)
4. The team commended Fresno State for its sound financial management and the completion of its \$200 million dollar fundraising campaign. (CFR 3.4.)

Recommendations:

1. The team recommended that the university develop a five-year plan for the implementation of core competencies in all degree programs and demonstrate that the learning outcomes were being achieved. (CFR 2.6.)
2. The team recommended that Fresno State develop a five-year business plan to accompany the strategic plan. (CFR 3.4.)
3. The team recommended that Fresno State set deadlines for its activities, such as the scheduling of program reviews and assessment of core competencies, and clearly communicate when deadlines need to be changed. (CFR 3.7.)
4. The team recommended that the university move forward with its implementation of e-portfolios as an assessment tool, following approved processes. (CFR 2.6.)

APPENDICES

- A. Federal Compliance Forms
 - 1. Credit Hour Review
 - 2. Marketing and Recruitment Review
 - 3. Student Complaints Review
 - 4. Transfer Policy Review

- B. Distance Education

- C. Report on Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

DRAFT

APPENDIX 1: CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where is the policy located? In website: fresnostate.edu/catalog/academics-regulations/policies.html , under "Academic Regulations."
	Comments: Specifies time equivalent of a credit hour as 50 minutes of seat time, including those other than seat time. It is assumed that two hours of preparation are required for each hour in class. Three hours of lab per week are equivalent of one unit. Two hours of activity or studio are normally equivalent to one unit of credit.
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Credit hour assignments are reviewed through new course approval process.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Review of meetings dates, days and times, within sample of Fall 2015 Courses schedule reflect required number of hours as appropriate for course units.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 4
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Both
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Online: Chicano Artistic Expression (CLAS9), Communicative Disorders and Deaf Studies (CDDS200); Hybrid: Music (Music 187); Public Health (PH109)
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 6
	What kinds of courses? Internships, clinical, labs
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Marketing (MKT195), Plant Science/Agricultural (Plant 194), Nursing (131L), Counseling (COUN238); Introductory Biology (BIOL1BL), Nursing (N210)
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 4
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? undergraduate degree, graduate: master, doctoral degree
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? (Bachelor) African Studies, (Bachelor) Business Administration/Accounting, (Master) Nursing, (Doctor) Education Leadership
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

Review Completed By: Anita Borja Enriquez

Date: October 21, 2015

APPENDIX 2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Overall cost of the degree can be found on the Fresno State website.
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Excellent website for Fresno State Alumni Association.

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Patricia A. Mitchell
Date: October 19, 2015

APPENDIX 3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where? Yes, within the institution's website: http://www.fresnostate.edu , within Undergraduate Catalog under "Student Complaint Procedure" section of "Policies."
	Comments:
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: A student complaint procedure found on the website addresses program quality or accrediting standards, or violation of state law, with further reference on how to appeal to the vice provost or to the CSU Chancellor's office complaints.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? Student Affairs office.
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: Yes. Academic petitions are handled through the petitions committee. Discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and Title IX are handled through Human Resources. Student Code of Conduct complaints are handled through student affairs; some are handled by academic departments.
	Comments:

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Anita Borja Enriquez

Date: October 21, 2015

APPENDIX 4 – TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publically available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? Fresno State Website; General Catalog online
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: There is an online student-transfer information system called (ASSIST). Students are able to get all questions answered. Students are encouraged to make an appointment with a counselor for further assistance.

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

- (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
- (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Patricia A. Mitchell
Date: October 19, 2015

APPENDIX B: DISTANCE EDUCATION

Institution: California State University - Fresno

Type of Visit: Reaccreditation

Name of reviewer/s: Gary A. Miller

Date/s of review: October 20-23, 2015

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

Master of Arts in Teaching

Master of Arts in Reading

Master of Water Resource Management

Additional courses: Additional courses within existing programs exist and are taught utilizing the online format. Support for creating and delivering these courses is strong within both the TILT and CSALT groups that include instructional designers and platform experts. In addition, students are broadly supported by highly trained and experienced students in many of their computing needs. The format for delivering assistance varies on the requestor: face-to-face is available as is online assistance and multimedia interactions.

2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)

Three programs offered at Master level (see above)

Additional courses offered through various CSU-F colleges

Courses offered in conjunction with West Hills Community College – Lemoore

On-line MBA through Sub change approved

Communication Disorders/Deaf Education is offering some courses 80% online beginning 2013

Additional documentation: NA

3. Nature of the review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

An onsite inspection occurred of the Technology Innovations for Learning and Teaching (TILT) group. Many products and programs are available for faculty for teaching and learning through online means. Also connected with the Center for Scholarly Advancement of Learning & Teaching. Both are highly interactive and innovative focused organizations with many excellent staff and trained students. The commitment levels to assist faculty and students in creating, delivering and taking online courses/program are great.

An online review of Information Technology Strategic Plan was conducted. This is a comprehensive plan focused upon “innovative technology initiatives and investments to realize the strategic institutional priorities” (from Vision Statement of IT Strategic Plan). A segment of the plan is designed to assist faculty and students in online learning initiatives.

A “Rubric for Assessing Information Literacy” has also been constructed and is being utilized to assist in campus and online learning environments.

Interviews were held with select members of the Senior Technology Team and the Information and Educational Technology Coordinating Committee, the latter chaired by the VP for Information Systems.

Observations and Findings

Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<p><i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?</p>	<p>Distance learning is inextricably linked to the institutional mission, operations, and administrative structure. Appropriate leadership is in place especially since the Chief Information Officer was hired. Planning for the future, along with funding, is an integral part of university operations.</p>	
<p><i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?</p>	<p>Students are afforded similar opportunities as campus-bound students, especially through assistance from technology-driven departments.</p>	
<p><i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?</p>	<p>The learning platforms and academic infrastructure are critically important for distance education success. Experts are available for development and consultation. Ample support and back-ups are available.</p>	
<p><i>Student Support Services:</i> What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?</p>	<p>These areas are great strengths for CSU-F. All capacity issues are in place for supporting distance education. Data support these findings.</p>	
<p><i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?</p>	<p>There is a mixture of full-time and part-time faculty who teach distance education courses. Some teach only in the distance-learning format. Support for faculty is robust and available at all hours through various methods. Ample training for faculty is available through TILT and CSALT.</p>	
<p><i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)</p>	<p>Faculty are integrally involved in designing programs and courses. Approvals are through normal university channels. Program appraisals follow the university-wide methods.</p>	<p>No credit hour report was generated.</p>
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to</p>		<p>Data have not yet been gathered or analyzed on students taking online courses/programs. The</p>

Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
other institutions' online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?		institution has been made aware of this issue.
<i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?	Student learning is assessed with similar methods for on-campus instruction. Student learning assessments appear to mimic on-campus instruction.	
<i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations</i> ?	All distance education programs are offered through institutionally-based information platforms. No outside vendors or contracts are utilized for delivery of distance education courses.	
<i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?	The institution utilizes similar quality assurance processes for online and on-campus programs. Evidence includes measures of graduation, goal attainment, learning outcomes metrics and satisfaction surveys. These mimic data analyzed for on-campus education courses/programs.	

Rev 3/2015

APPENDIX C: Report on Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

A special visit team conducted a site visit to review the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at Fresno State (DPELFS) in fall 2012. In the letter sent to President John Welty, March 5, 2013, WASC expected the following areas, which required further attention and development, to be incorporated into the institutional report in fall 2014:

1. Revise the dissertation rubrics to ensure that minimum expectations are made explicit and that all students meet those expectations. (CFR 2.4, 2.5, 2.6.)
2. Develop a singular conceptual framework for learning that builds on the efforts to date. (CFR 2.3, 4.2.)
3. Strive to achieve a diverse faculty. (CFR 1.5.)
4. Monitor the capacity of DPELFS to deliver its program without sacrificing quality, while assuming a leadership role in the development of doctoral programs at two other CSUs. (CFR 3.1, 3.4.)

While these issues were not addressed in the institutional report, through additional data requests, post self-study documents, and interviews during the site visit, the team was able to review all materials and address the areas raised in the special visit report dated October, 2012.

The team commends the DPELFS for its continued involvement with the Carnegie Project; its signature pedagogy (e.g., embedded fieldwork); and its vast number of resources supporting the program. (CFRs 2.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6.)

Revising the dissertation rubric. While the dissertation rubrics appeared to be useful tools for gauging the quality of dissertation, the DPELFS had revised the dissertation rubrics to ensure that all students achieve minimum expectations for the quality of dissertations. (CFR 2.4, 2.5, 2.6.) A review of several dissertations showed strong evidence of improved quality in both Chapters 3 and 5. (CFR 2.5.)

Develop a singular conceptual framework. There was strong evidence that the DPELFS was achieving its educational objectives through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning. Through the SOAPs, DPELFS established a range of viable assessment activities and appeared to be using the results of assessment positively. (CFR 2.3). Other documents reviewed included the mission statement for the program and curriculum maps for all courses. (CFR 2.7, 4.2.)

Striving to achieve a diverse faculty. Since the last visit, the leadership of the DPELFS had changed, and now reflected either the program's students, or the Kremen School of Education as a whole. While the number of core faculty in the DPELFS had been reduced since the WASC visit in 2012 from 21 to 16, affiliate faculty had increased from 12 to 15 and the number of adjuncts had increased from 11 to 17; the overall racial and ethnic diversity of the core faculty had increased from 12.5% to 25% (CFR 1.5, 3.2), and 83% of new Graduate Group members in the past two years were underrepresented minorities. (CFR 3.1.)

Monitor the capacity of DPELFS. The DPELFS carefully and systematically demonstrated its ongoing capacity to deliver a higher-quality doctoral program to regional students. The faculties of the two CSU campuses (Fresno State and Bakersfield) worked closely with regional educational leaders in developing a joint doctoral program. As a result of this collaboration, the Commission approved the offering of the Joint EdD in Educational Leadership degree between Fresno State and California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) to be implemented in August 2014 with a deadline for implementation under this current approval of August 16. (CFR 3.1, 3.4.)