

Charting our Course

Academic Planning for CSUCI's Future

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I. Planning Framework

This section identifies the desired outcomes, the big questions we want answered, our planning assumptions, and the role of faculty. While some of this might not initially appear to necessary to state, shared talking points by campus leadership is critical for the success of this effort.

I.A. Desired Outcomes

The primary goal is to create an academic plan that will lead to the expansion of our academic programs and degrees in line with our mission while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

A secondary outcome is to build consensus around a shared identity for CSUCI that will inform our university-wide strategic planning.

These decisions will impact the campus for the foreseeable future—the reputation and trajectories of universities are measured in decades and generations. We are charting a course that will determine the nature of CSUCI not simply in 2030, but more importantly in 2050 and beyond.

I.B. Big Questions

As this process unfolds, we are aiming to build consensus around the following big questions:

- *What is distinctive about CSUCI and how does that distinctiveness enhance our mission? What are the distinctive features of a CSUCI education and why do we believe these are critically important for our students?*
- *What is our brand? What is our shared “elevator speech” that captures succinctly our mission?*
- *Who will we serve?*
- *How are we serving the public good? What are the critical regional, statewide, and national issues that we must address to fulfill our mission?*
- *What are we not going to do? What do our peers do well that, while having value, is not something CSUCI will pursue? (Examples include: Being an urban campus, having a Division I football team, etc.)*
- *How can CSUCI become the destination campus—the campus of choice—for students throughout the region and the state?*

I.C. Planning Assumptions

Every conversation starts somewhere. Here are some assumptions which need to be put on the table, but don't necessarily require reexamination or defense per se. These include:

- Students will fall into three large groups:
 - First-time students, typically recent high school graduates, seeking an in-person university experience, both residential and commuting students. *Due to the developmental needs of young adults, there will always be a market for these students.*
 - Transfer students, primarily from local community colleges, but possibly from more distant districts. *This market will grow with recent national efforts aimed at making college the norm for all high school graduates.*
 - Working adults looking for career enhancement through degree completion, graduate degrees, post-baccalaureate certificates, and similar “up-skilling.” *Due to demographic shifts, this non-traditional demographic will need to be a larger part of our portfolio.*
- CSUCI will serve its region first and foremost but can position itself to serve a statewide audience, while aspiring to have a national reputation and attract international students.
- Growing enrollment is both good and an imperative, while failing to grow enrollment creates significant risks to the institution. *One hypothesis for falling enrollment is that lack of demand by potential students is an indicator of a lack of perceived value and quality. Other hypotheses include CSUCI's constrained abilities to offer degrees that serve the region, lack of effective marketing and branding, insufficient on-campus student services, and students' perceptions of their financial resiliency during a period of significant social and political upheaval.*

- Demographic data point to increased competition among universities for students, requiring successful institutions to maintain a high value proposition for prospective students.
- The same demographic data points to increased diversity among students, which means that successful institutions must approach their work through a DEI lens.
- As an HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) and at the threshold of becoming a AANAPSI (Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution), CSUCI aspires to become a minority *servicing* institution, and not simply a minority *enrolling* institution.
- While disruptive forces will continue, including technological changes, social division, increased competition, and economic uncertainty, the core mission and structure of higher education is unlikely to change significantly over the coming decades. *For better or worse, higher education is designed to change slowly.*
- The University will offer a mix of modalities for academic programs which will evolve over time, but will always be aimed at serving the needs of students. This includes not only course modality, but pedagogical approaches.
- This academic planning process can lead to a pareto optimal outcome, that is, everyone can be better off. It is not a zero-sum competition for resources. The success of individual units contributes to the success of the whole and benefits all members of the University.
- As a corollary to the above, great universities are amalgamations of many smaller units, each working independently to achieve excellence. Our process needs to incentivize decentralized initiatives and give faculty and deans agency, while setting out expectations for accountability. *Even though this process is “centralized” in the Provost’s office, it needs to capitalize on local initiative.*
- Investments in the scholar-teacher and artist-teacher model of the faculty will bear long-term dividends that will enable CSUCI to achieve its mission. A 21st century education equips graduates to produce new knowledge in novel situations. Faculty research and scholarship is a cornerstone of academic excellence.
- Our physical campus (quads, lawns, mission style architecture) and our regional location (weather, proximity to oceans and national park) are significant assets, but at the same time a limiting factor. The campus should capitalize on its location while not aspiring to a vision that is incompatible with our geographical location and the demographics of the surrounding community.

I.D. Faculty Participation

Robust faculty participation in creating our multi-year academic plan will not only lead to better results but will result in a plan that is more readily achieved, while simultaneously shaping a shared identity across campus. While not excluding staff and students, the process is designed to recognize the special relationship between faculty and the curriculum. At the same time, we are facing some challenges coming out of COVID has taxed faculty bandwidth, even as the planning becomes more and more urgent. The

process outlined below is intended to maximize faculty participation under these less-than-ideal circumstances.

II. Planning Process

This section includes an overview of the timeline, data collection, faculty teams, internal marketing, and implementation.

II.A. Planning Timeline – *Dates are placeholders*

Immediate:

- Marketing tagline, graphic identity outlined
- Steering committee formed, including faculty representatives
- Calendar of events confirmed

October 26:

- Academic Planning Launch, virtual, online, in Academic Senate.

Next eight weeks:

- Data Collection begins
- Faculty participation through brown bags, guest speakers, online polls, and coffee with the Provost/Dean/etc.
 - Meetings organized around response to position papers, data collected, provocative questions, and so forth
- Internal marketing effort fully underway: website, routine emails, etc.
- Faculty teams selected
- External consultants engaged
- Meetings with external stakeholders, including community colleges, high schools, industry, local government officials, and similar

January 5–26

- Faculty teams are formed and meet to make proposals
 - Begins with retreat with academic leadership, cabinet, and external consultants

January 27: Campus-wide Forum

- Half-day event, focusing on presentations by faculty teams, with real time feedback and input

February 14: DRAFT Plan distributed

February 18: Townhall presentation on Draft Plan

- Two-week comment period follows. Can include online polling and focus groups.

March 14: Final Plan distributed

March through June:

- DAA will identify funding requirements and work with BFA to develop financial models for future incorporation in the campus fiscal planning framework. This phase includes projects.

II.B Faculty Teams

During the month of January, five to seven faculty teams will work on creating proposals for vetting at a January 27th campus-wide forum. This work will begin with an all-day, in-person retreat with Cabinet and Academic Affairs leadership on January 5th. Stipends of \$5,000 are available to faculty for their work, with \$6,000 for team leaders. Teams are expected to be formed around the following themes:

- Multiple teams around broad curriculum areas (e.g., Arts, Sciences, Humanities, Business and communication, or similar), with purpose of making data-informed proposals.
- A team on the core, distinguishing features of a CSUCI education (e.g., experiential learning, prepared for the green economy, regional engagement with National Park and Marine Sanctuary, etc.)
- A team focused on the mission pillars, with the purpose of interrogating, confirming, and/or reimagining mission pillars and recommending strategies for integrating the mission pillars into the core of academic mission.
- A team on academic organization, i.e., colleges vs schools, creation of departments, the optimum number of colleges, which departments go to which schools, timeline for implementation, streamlining curriculum processes, and similar issues.

II.C. Data Collection

Decisions regarding expanding majors and adding additional degrees need to be grounded in reliable, publicly available data. This might include, for example, the academic plans from other campuses as well as polls of students, faculty, and staff. Some of this can be collected in-house, some of it by teams of staff and faculty, and some of it by external consultants (e.g., EAB). One of the first steps will be to precisely identify the scope and purpose of the data we are aiming to collect. Some initial examples include:

- The degree profiles of regional competitors and aspirational campuses, including CSU's, UC's, and privates, noting program modality.
- Transfer rates by intended degree from regional community colleges.
- System-wide data, including enrollment trends by major, redirects, and regional trends.
- Profile of current regional workforce by sector, with projections of future growth for high demand areas.
- A compilation of faculty wish lists and blue sky proposals.
- A compilation of the wisdom and expectations of industry and community leaders.
- Input from students regarding potential majors they would like to see developed.
- Examples of other academic plans.
- The degree profile of successful campuses, including the number of students per major. (The purpose here is to forecast how many majors we can support and their relative size. We want to understand what a reasonable mix of degrees would look like.)

- Other information relevant to the development of degree programs, such as the impact of Open Education Resources, z-majors, low residency programs, and similar.

II.D. Internal Marketing

While eventually the academic plan can be used with external stakeholders, the first audience will be internal. Tasks associated with internal marketing should begin immediately. Broadly speaking our marketing effort should include the following:

- A tagline (e.g., “Charting our Course”)
- A graphic identity
- A website with resources
- Routine emails and social media
- Opportunities for personal interaction, e.g., coffee with Provost, Deans, President, etc.
- Continual reference by campus leadership (e.g., at Senate, in interviews, with stakeholders, etc.)
- An ongoing feedback loop that solicits continuous input from stakeholders.

II.E. Curriculum Processes

Under the current structure, APPC recommends an academic master plan each year to the Senate. In recent years, this annual ritual has been more compliance oriented as opposed to rooted in a substantive conversation around strategic planning and resources. One goal is to use the academic plan as the basis for a robust conversation on immediate priorities, resource requirements, and near-term (1-2 year) goals.

The existing curriculum review processes would remain in place. The Division of Academic Affairs is committed to making continuous improvements to this process to facilitate expedited review and lessen the burden of making proposals.