

DRAFT

California State University
Northridge

Academic Affairs

Provost's Planning Information Guide

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PROVOST’S PLANNING INFORMATION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Planning across the University will enable us to achieve our vision and use our resources wisely. Not every plan developed in a College or other Academic Affairs unit will use every element of this guide. However, every plan should rest on evidence and should link to the University's priorities that are detailed below. This Guide is an overview of the timeline, inputs and University goals that drive the vision. The front sections describe these issues in a general way. Appendix 1 contains the templates that divisions fill out and submit.

A. The Purpose, Goal and Timeline of Planning.

The reason that we plan is to clarify our collective intentions for CSUN. We do so, in part, by evaluating the consequences of past actions and by projecting future trends and needs.

Today, higher education everywhere is facing fundamental changes. New funding patterns, new technologies, expansion and changes in disciplinary knowledge, global competition, continuing education, an emphasis on accountability, new legislation, and more are pushing higher education to reconsider much that it has long taken for granted.

This is a pivotal moment in CSUN's history as we approach our fiftieth year. There are many challenges but many opportunities that are open to us. Setting insightful and ambitious long-term goals and accomplishing them through annual planning will be essential to our success.

Appendix 2 details the timeline; but here it is in brief:

- Fall: Administration and Finance including Facilities and Human Resources, Advancement, Extended Learning, Academic Personnel, Institutional Research, GRIP/Undergraduate Studies prepare summary views (see below) that provide the context for program planning. These summary views are 5-10 pages each. These are reviewed and revised by the appropriate governance committees.
- Late Fall and Winter: Divisions develop their views for the next three to five years. Reports should not exceed ten pages.
- Spring: The Vice-Presidents, deans and directors synthesize these views in consultation with the governance committees.
- Early Summer: The President responds. Major differences, if any, are reconciled by Cabinet and Executive Committee.

B. Effective planning has these characteristics:

1. It differentiates between annual plans (which update essential tasks and document prerequisites for new initiatives) and the third-year review (which includes a reconsideration of overarching goals).
2. Within annual planning, there are multiple opportunities for governance committees
 - a. to question and revise assumptions, first,
 - b. and to question and make recommendations about tactics and strategies, second
3. Within the third-year vision, there should be opportunities for governance committees
 - a. to contribute to the reformulation of the campus Vision and Mission, in the context of CSU goals and the President's goals; and
 - b. to take a longer view of the inputs that both constrain and enable planning:
 1. FTES projections,
 2. demographic analyses of phenomena such as high-school graduation and community college transfer rates,
 3. budget prospects such as the Compact,
 4. Advancement's analyses of the potential impact of fund-raising,
 5. GRIP and the TUC's forecasts for grants and contracts
 6. physical planning including the Master Plan and capital outlay
 7. changes in academic disciplines
 8. and the technology infrastructure that supports them.

Additionally, planning has these attributes:

4. a connection between division plans and actions, on the one hand, and University priorities, on the other;
5. the participation by stakeholders so that they can plan, without being inundated by reporting requirements;
6. the use of evidence to explain plans—and the changes that they project. Evidence should be drawn primarily from responses to the indices and benchmarks—like the departments' assessment reports, program reviews, and the CSU Accountability Report—that already have been designed for that purpose. However, scans of the organization's needs and of external influences are reasonable, as well;
7. plans for action that are reasonable, given the constraints of time, space, money, and staff, and that are agreed to by the various groups who design and review them (see Appendix 3 for the constraints or inputs that affect planning);
8. an executive sponsor—faculty, staff, or administrator—who will guide planning in each college/division; and
9. a planning cycle that runs naturally across the year, using existing committees and capitalizing on existing due dates for assessment reports and position requests, etc. See Appendix 2 for the cycle of consultation with governance committees.

C. Who plans?

1. Colleges or equivalent units submit plans. They assign someone(s) to manage the process.
2. A steering group—the dean and chairs and/or a designated faculty committee—must decide, however, on the best way to gather information. For example, all departments in a college could be asked to review and then submit responses to the college steering body. Alternatively, departments could be requested to submit responses to just several categories, while college-level committees and/or administrators compile the rest.
3. In the end, the college or division submits a report that
 - a. concentrates on major initiatives in **Academic Quality, Student Engagement, and Shared Values**;
 - b. reflects consultation with units like the Library, Facilities, and ITR, etc when their expertise and resources are inferred;
 - c. follows the templates for either the three-year or annual plan;
 - d. has the approval of the highest-level committee that approves curriculum and/or programs in the college or equivalent division;
 - e. includes an index or appendix that states clearly where the background documentation for this report can be found in a central location in the college or division.

D. CSUN's Mission and Guiding Principles:

CSUN's Mission and Vision commit to excellence, inclusion, and regional need. The President's additional goals have stressed links to the community and the accessibility of services ("user-friendliness") not only to students and the public but to our own employees.

The President also has encouraged the campus to be more learning-centered; that is, to put into play strategies that individualize learning, separate seat time from academic credit, improve programs through assessment, and require institutional change to specify the impact on learning objectives. The focus is on both undergraduates and graduate students.

Finally, the CSU now requires that we report against benchmarks in the Accountability Report. That report indicates, too, that campuses must do direct assessments of students' learning as well as cyclical program reviews and (re-)accreditations. In 2004-05, the Board of Trustees developed twenty-two benchmarks for student engagement and retention. We must report on those, as well.

Essentially, the campus emphasizes a subset of guiding principles:

- **academic quality:** we aim for excellence that is sustained by self-examination;
- **student engagement:** we work to retain and graduate students by fostering social cohesion;
- **shared values:** we not only value diversity, community alliances, and accessible services, but we act on those values.

Each division will address these goals—and the criteria that follow—in terms that are appropriate to its functional charge. So, for instance, the Library would focus on how its collections and services would enhance academic quality, student engagement and shared values.

E. **Planning Inputs:** We plan with the resources that Academic Resources and Administration and Finance forecast.

1. **FUNDING:** The major funding sources are:
 - a. funds that come to us and grow—marginal funding dollars
 - b. funds that come to us one-time, through special CSU or CSUN initiatives
 - c. funds that come to us through standing allocations for equipment, as through the Lottery
 - d. funds that we re-purpose: salary savings through retirements, administrative efficiencies, curricular changes as examples.

Generally, a) provides the largest source of funds.

2. **Enrollment:** We also plan on the assumption of FTES/HC that are developed by the Chancellor’s Office but elaborated locally by Institutional Research, in conjunction with the Provost and Academic Resources. These offices, too, will provide the division with a three-to-five year overview, as well as a range of targets that will likely be assigned to each college contingent on planning.
3. **Structure and Infrastructure:** We rely too on both Administration and Finance and ITR for an overview of facilities, services and technology. Before the campus plans, it will receive scans from these areas on these and related topics:
 - a. an estimate and guide to minor capital outlay requests—how much funding likely will be available and for what sort of tasks.
 - b. a charting of current and projected major capital projects, along with a synopsis of prospects for bonding
 - c. a view of the next steps in realizing the master plan
 - d. a scan of distant and immediate changes in academic and information technologies; particular attention will be paid to mobility, 24/7, virtualization of services and instruction, automation of self-help, and the next stages in CMS and other major ERP’s.
 - e. and preliminary warnings about disruptions caused by construction, repair and/or implementation.
4. **Entrepreneurialism:** Increasingly, academics must be entrepreneurs who are subsidized for invention only in part. As a result, the division must integrate into its planning forecasts from Extended Learning, Advancement, GRIP, Human Resources and Academic Personnel:
 - a. Extended Learning will present a summary of learning opportunities, based on demographic and professional trends.

- b. GRIP, working with Undergraduate Studies, will project benchmarks for grants and contracts, assess units' readiness to compete, and summarize procedural changes that such growth requires.
- c. Advancement will indicate goals—financial targets, events, stewarding—for the next period; and it will begin to assess the unit's readiness for a major campaign.
- d. Academic Personnel and Human Resources will assemble a brief digest of laws and policies that academic entrepreneurs will need.

Summary of the Work Product: Each division will produce a ten page vision every three years. It should cover the categories below, as appropriate. The final report to the President will synthesize these reports after appropriate consultation with governance.

The next three sections explain the Performance Areas of Academic Quality, Student Engagement, and Shared Values; divisions respond with their plans by adapting the templates in the Appendix. You will find beneath each subsection below, a brief description of what the division should focus on. The final report to the President will synthesize these responses after appropriate consultation with governance.

1: ACADEMIC QUALITY

A. **Assessment** CSUN is in the early stages of identifying academic quality as the value that higher education adds to the base of knowledge that students bring with them. The initiative of the learning-centered university grounds this effort. It requires us to clarify learning objectives. Direct assessment then discloses the gap, if any, between learning objectives and achievements. Institutional self-examination replaces external reputation as the measure of learning.

This section asks you to explain the progress that the division has made—and will make— in assessment: setting benchmarks, assessing against them, using results, etc.

B. **The Learning Centered University:** The last WASC Report and, since then, the President have focused the campus on becoming more learning-centered. CSUN faculty and staff have developed pedagogies and learning objectives that take into account the different ways and paces by which students learn, as well as the different media and formats that suit different disciplines and levels of instruction. These efforts include:

1. clarifying high standards and providing students with the opportunities to achieve them, through the following methods;
2. linking classroom experiences to applied settings on “the outside”;
3. re-conceptualizing instruction by emphasizing self-pacing and/or small group work;
4. separating the accomplishment of learning objectives from the accumulation of seat time in order to place competencies at the forefront of learning;
5. using technology innovatively to bridge distance, time, or disparate styles of learning
6. working across units or divisions to build cohorts of students and enrich learning through engagement;
7. building on CSUN’s commitment to diversity—in academic programs, outreach, and campus services;
8. redesigning curricula to reinforce either basic skills, general education, or small-group cohesion;
9. working across units to capitalize on interdisciplinary perspectives; and.
10. incorporating assessments and feedback loops into program planning.

A college/division should demonstrate academic innovation as well. While LCU captures much of this, the academic program—baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, ExL—can include innovations that derive from other shared values at CSUN:

11. addressing regional needs (service)

12. breaking new interdisciplinary ground (collaboration)
13. target non-matriculated clients or students (alliances, outreach)
14. internationalizing the campus (diversity, respect for all people)
15. deploying technology to improve access to academic services, save budgets, or quicken the pace of tasks (accessibility)
16. and modifying how we evaluate one another to capitalize on changes in expertise and interest across the span of one's employment (collaboration).

In this section, record the major ways in which the division has implemented—and will implement—several principles of a learning-centered and/or innovative university. Indicate, too, the extent to which funds have been redeployed to these ends.

- C. **Research and Creative Activity:** CSUN recognizes the critical importance of research and creative activity as ends in themselves as well as a principal means to improve student learning and serve regional needs.

Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies, Research, and International Programs will prepare a Joint Report on Research that summarizes the funded research undertaken in the previous year—its subjects, impact, and source of support. The report also will recommend how best to exceed benchmarks.

Colleges and other units will add pertinent information about initiatives for the next cycle that either will: 1) “incentivize” research 2) require matches, in-kind support, or enhancements to facilities 3) respond to regional needs 4) revamp the delivery of the curriculum and/or the involvement of students as apprentices and 5) or require reforms in RPT.

- D. **Revisioning Programs:** The major premise of this section is that program change builds on evidence:
1. program reviews,
 2. direct assessment of student learning,
 3. scans of program needs
 4. evaluation of scholarly/creative activity (professional meetings, publications, grants/contracts, proposal submissions, community-based projects, and the involvement of students)
 5. scans of regional needs, and
 6. the regularization of learning-centered experiments and other innovations when evidence so justifies.

Now, with this evidence in mind, what changes do you anticipate? You will receive an FTES overview, budget estimates, and other projections that will allow you to plan realistically. However, numbers do not tell the story; they merely frame it. Fill in the frame by addressing questions like these:

1. **How are the fields in the division changing?**
 - a. **What is the demographic demand?**
2. **What new programs do you foresee? How will the unit and CSUN integrate the cost?**
 - a. **What will be phased out?**
3. **After examining the demographic characteristics of the faculty, what, if any, changes in the work force do you see?**
4. **What are the division's greatest challenges and opportunities?**
5. **What assessment/evaluation questions lead you to propose these changes?**

2: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

A. The Learning Centered University:

As mentioned under Academic Quality, CSUN has committed to being “learning-centered.” This entails the understanding that not only is learning facilitated by experiences outside of class but that learning also occurs outside of academic settings. The campus has supported and publicized a variety of activities that are intended to increase students’ engagement, including:

1. articulating high standards and giving students opportunities, through the following methods, to achieve them
2. arranging students in cohorts, linked classes, or residential study units so that they can learn as groups and develop connections
3. establishing learning objectives for clubs, IRA activities, and practical experiences—especially those that serve a special local, regional, or state need
4. developing seminars that orient new students to the University, academic rigor, and career possibilities
5. deploying models of intrusive advising and early warnings to monitor progress
6. delivering quality advising, counseling, and services at off-peak hours
7. sponsoring out-of-class projects that require students to apply skills in joint projects
8. modifying advising materials and technologies so that meaning and process are easier to negotiate
9. accommodating other requests from the Boards of Trustees to increase engagement and remove barriers:
 - a. mapping degree programs
 - b. scheduling courses on the basis of these maps and student demand
 - c. reducing units in degree programs, where feasible
 - d. encouraging an early declaration of major to give purpose and order to course taking
10. tracking and researching persistence rates of various sub-groups, especially FTF from the first to second year
11. working cooperatively with divisions such as Student Affairs to conceptualize and then deploy morphologies of student development.
12. conceiving new methods of evaluating advising so that feedback can improve that complex array of processes and individuals.

Reflect on how your unit will contribute to the CSUN effort to engage, retain, stimulate and graduate its students. This section must address 10.)

3: SHARED VALUES

CSUN has telegraphed publicly these values:

1. respect for all people, manifested not just by equity in hiring and in treatment of students but by the inclusion of diverse perspectives in programs;
2. alliances with regional communities both to serve their needs and to benefit from their resources and advice;
3. user-friendliness so that the public is not overwhelmed by complex policies and disparate offices that otherwise might alienate them from gaining an education;
4. collaboration among ourselves, not just with external constituents, to tackle complexities for which no one department or enterprise has a solution;
5. and improved communications, internally and externally, so that CSUN's various departments are on message, messages are delivered in media that are reliable and publicized, and published materials—letters, newsletters, emails, etc.—are sequenced appropriately throughout the year.

A. **Respect for all people, active engagement with diversity:**

Faculty Affairs and Institutional Research can provide baseline data. Indicate, if appropriate, the projects that the unit/division has undertaken and/or will undertake to increase the

1. **the representativeness of CSUN's workforce,**
2. **the numbers/percents of minority students who track to advanced degrees after CSUN,**
3. **and the BA and MA persistence/completion rates of CSUN's diverse populations.**

B. **Alliances with the Community:**

Enumerate and explain your major community links, past and envisioned. Projects can include community-service courses, internships, school-intervention programs, joint training institutes, etc. The focus is on the five-valley service area (San Fernando, Simi, Antelope, Santa Clarita, and Conejo). What philosophy—what thread—ties together these venues?

C. User-Friendly University:

CSUN has developed many forms, procedures, and objectives. The public, who often must negotiate several offices, sometimes cannot complete a transaction because they cannot connect the dots. Sometimes, they even cannot find a CSUN employee who can help them connect the dots. Keywords describe the qualities of a less opaque organization:

1. transparent: the process, form, or communication is designed with the client, not employee, in mind;
2. accessible: materials and services can be found easily; they are available to day and evening students, always meet disability standards, and are, when appropriate, available from off-site;
3. one-stop shop: students should be able to complete transactions, either virtually or in person, without trekking from office to office; this can require that either employees be cross-trained or services or that services be juxtaposed in the same space;
4. just-in-time: information should be available encyclopedically for those who want to look ahead. But CSUN ought to tailor its delivery to what a student needs to know at a specific time, based on typical indicators, so that s/he is not inundated;
5. work-flow: leveraging—that is, turning on—features in enterprise software that automate and quicken the transfer of information from office to office by integrating digital updates to both clients and responsible staff;
6. help: on-line processes should have several features to answer users' questions:
 - a. an indexed knowledge base that is accessible 24/7,
 - b. a virtual (not necessarily physically) consolidated “desk,” available nearly 24/7 by email, that can answer detailed queries,
 - c. and a phone contact, available 8/5, to answer complicated questions.

Indicate the projects, under way and projected, that will make the University more transparent to students, staff, client, and the general public.