REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
SPECIAL VISIT

To California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

October 25-27, 2023

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution, Accreditation History, as relevant, and Visit

The mission of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona–known as Cal Poly Pomona (CPP)–is to "cultivate success through a diverse culture of experiential learning, discovery, and innovation." The campus was established in the fall of 1938 as a branch campus of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, separated from this "main campus" in 1966, earned WSCUC accreditation in 1970, and was granted university status in 1972 by the California State University (CSU). As a regional comprehensive state university, CPP now comprises over 2,700 faculty and staff, serves ~27,000 students, and has a network of more than 170,000 alumni.

As one of three polytechnic universities in the CSU, CPP prides itself cultivating student practitioners, integrative thinkers, and model leaders through a "learn-by-doing" approach that prepares students for civic engagement and fulfilling professional and personal lives. The current Strategic Plan focuses on strengthening an inclusive approach to polytechnic education by coupling innovation and academic excellence with a holistic model for student success grounded in the six core values: academic excellence, experiential learning, inclusivity, student learning and success, community engagement, and social and environmental responsibility.

The institution includes eight academic colleges (Agriculture, Business Administration, Education and Integrative Studies, Engineering, Environmental Design, Science, Hospitality Management, and Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences) that together offer 54 bachelors degrees, 34 master degrees, and an Ed.D. Beyond the campus, CPP provides a strategic selection of academic programs across eight southern California locations, including an agricultural training program in Escondido, an evening-hours K-12 administrative service credential at various high

schools across greater Los Angeles, and a Master of Interior Architecture within UCLA Extension space.

CPP's last reaffirmation of accreditation by WSCUC was in 2019, and included the scheduling of a Special Visit in 2023 to assess progress on seven WSCUC recommendations. CPP submitted their Special Visit Report detailing progress on these seven recommendations to WSCUC in August of 2023.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The Special Visit review team was constituted on June 12th, 2023, and the team chair emailed a team letter on July 31st, 2023, outlining the general timeline and proposed member assignments for the Special Visit. Upon receipt of the CPP Special Visit Report on August 21st, 2023, team members worked asynchronously to complete their assigned sections of the Special Visit team worksheet. The review team then met via Zoom on September 29th, 2023, to discuss their preliminary findings, confirm team member roles and responsibilities, and start developing the visit schedule and list of requested additional materials. The assistant chair then worked with the CPP Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) to finalize the visit schedule and obtain the requested additional materials prior to the visit. The Special Visit began informally with an evening team session on Tuesday, October 24th, 2023, where the team reviewed the visit schedule and finalized the leads, questions, and discussion items for each session during the visit.

The formal Special Visit began on Wednesday, October 25th, with sessions with the president, the president's cabinet, and the chief diversity officer and DEI committee. These meetings set the stage for the remainder of the visit, which included meetings with individual vice presidents, organizational groups and units (e.g., academic deans, student affairs staff in equity and belonging programs, academic senate executive committee), selected representatives

for specific recommendations (e.g., individuals from across campus involved in graduate programs, integrated planning, etc.), and a lunch with student leadership. Prior to and throughout the visit, a confidential WSCUC-based email address was available to the campus community, and received communications were considered by the review team. The Special Visit ended on Friday, October 27th, with a private meeting between the team chair and university president followed by a public exit meeting where the team chair presented findings in the form of commendations and recommendations.

The various visit sessions were productive and largely positive, and the review team was impressed by the level of commitment of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to their campus mission and community. The team was particularly appreciative of the responsiveness of the ALO to various questions and requests during the visit. Prior to, during, and following the visit, designated first and second writers developed their team report sections based on review of the CPP Special Visit Report, the team worksheet, inspection of additional documentation and information provided by CPP, and findings from the various sessions during the visit.

C. Institution's Special Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

The CPP Special Visit Report provided a cogent, candid, and comprehensive document focused on recent actions and next steps for each of the seven commission-endorsed recommendations from the 2019 Accreditation Visit. The collective authorship of the report is attributed to the Special Visit Report Writing team, which was constituted in Summer 2021 and composed of administrators, staff, and faculty assigned to different 2019 recommendations (Special Visit Report, Table 2, p. 8). This writing team worked across the broad campus to gather relevant information, and drafts were shared for feedback from eleven campus committees during the spring 2023 semester. The emerging final draft of the entire Special Visit Report was

shared with the president's cabinet prior to its submission to WSCUC in August 2023. As is often the case, the review team examination of the Special Visit Report raised some questions that led to some specific requests for "additional evidence," and the ALO provided these materials in a timely and organized manner prior to the visit. Taken together, the Special Visit report and provided additional evidence demonstrate that CPP undertook the Special Visit process with seriousness and candor, and is committed to honest and open communication with the Commission. (CFR 1.8).

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

Recommendation 1: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

"Address issues of diversity and inclusion as a core value identified

in the Strategic Plan with a sense of urgency. (CFR 1.4)"

CPP has explicitly communicated a unique role for itself as an "inclusive polytechnic university" through the integration of the values of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in its mission statement and Strategic Plan. Since the 2019 Accreditation Visit, these public aims have been shaped further by the national conversations about policing and the impacts of COVID-19, and have coalesced in an approach to "lead through listening" (Special Visit Report, p. 9). A review of the Special Visit Report and interviews during the visit confirmed that the institution is firmly committed to diversity and inclusion as a core value. It has addressed the 2019 recommendations to include DEI in institutional plans in ways that connect formal documents to visible efforts and resource allocations that translated these aspirations into vehicles for educational learning and skills (CFRs 1.1, 1.4). The Special Visit team concluded that CPP has used DEI activities for students, faculty, and staff effectively. The institution has opportunities to deepen engagement among its members by "closing the loop" and using assessment evidence to

improve ongoing institutional and student programming. CPP would benefit from more public communications about its progress in this area.

The institutional investments of hiring a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), establishing an Office of Inclusive Excellence, and promoting annual reflection through surveys about DEI were tangible steps that established institutional accountability and also exemplified how CPP enacted the principles that guided its DEI work to "engage in discussion, build capacity, and commit to the work" (Special Visit report, p. 9). DEI within CPP has moved beyond a central office's responsibility by developing permanent councils (i.e., the Campus Police and Safety Advisory Committee, the Inclusive Excellence Council), restructuring divisional efforts in student affairs, embracing institutional curricular changes stemming from the Ethnic Studies Faculty Cluster Hiring Program, and engaging in system-wide DEI opportunities (e.g., CSU Racial Equity Leadership Alliance). Special Visit team discussions with faculty, student, and staff groups reflected consensus about understanding that DEI was a major priority for the campus and existed at multiple levels for campus engagement. Whether as students engaging in multiple residential and social club opportunities, as administrators planning strategic vision from the President's Cabinet, as faculty reviewing Student Success Statements during candidate recruitments, or as student affairs staff participating in inventories concerning their intercultural competencies, CPP members shared DEI responsibilities to shape and model aspects of inclusion on campus (CFRs 1.1, 1.4, 3.1).

While it is desirable to have multiple groups and efforts for the many facets of DEI work, it is also critical to understand how these multiple areas intersect and coordinate their work to ensure that goals and processes are strategic, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely for stated priorities. The Special Visit team encourages CPP members to inventory or review the

range of DEI initiatives underway to determine opportunities for greater efficiencies and meaningful structures. For example, while the current Cozen assessment responses for Title IX work examined the "touch points between offices for this reporting," it was unclear how CPP used evidence from the campus-wide responses expressing concerns over reporting harassment and about campus openness to religious expression to inform program improvements. A few comments from staff groups suggested some resistance when collaborating with faculty (e.g., "it's not my job"), broader campus collaborations on DEI occurring "by sheer accident" rather than intentional design, and delays in solidifying more expansive work while awaiting leadership appointments (e.g., "when you don't have permanent deans, you cannot do permanent work"). Multiple comments from a student group suggested greater reliance on advising from internal cultural affinity groups due to inaccessible academic structures and inhospitable instructor support. The next phase for CPP may be to examine what is prioritized for the multiple groups engaged in DEI efforts at the campus-wide, student, faculty, and staff levels to identify opportunities for efficiencies and resource/budget collaborations, particularly considering CPP's current emphasis on cost-saving measures for the campus.

CPP understands that results from their Inclusive Campus Survey and other efforts (e.g., Black Wellness Assessment) were not fully reflective of student voices due to low participation, and this raised some concern among the Special Visit team related to combatting survey fatigue on sensitive topics and gleaning more nuanced and comprehensive information to assess the impact of DEI initiatives on an ongoing basis. For example, comments were made about the incompatibility of systems that negatively affected access to relevant and multiple indicators. Compatible systems or having the ability to compile meaningful indices from multiple sources could promote shared data review, shared resources for identified follow-up actions, and shared

accountability and transparency. The Special Visit team understands that data collection and usable assessment results in this area typically emerges over long periods of time. Further, CPP efforts have been revisited as campuses emerge from COVID-19 and other national crises. However, the Special Visit team encourages CPP to consider multiple ways to engage the broader student population in this issue given high student interest in campus climate and well-being, as well as published research demonstrating positive relationships among campus climate, student enrollment, retention, and donations. There were several examples gleaned from interviews with student affairs representatives where innovations in social media were used for data collection to circumvent survey fatigue, and where needs for alignment across data systems were identified to facilitate better DEI tracking.

Promising steps to broaden the DEI dialogue have also been taken by establishing a Campus Police and Safety Advisory Committee. The committee, which includes the Chief of the University Police, meets monthly and draws its mandate from a police advisory taskforce report issued in spring, 2021. The committee is enthusiastic about its work, and has so far reviewed and renewed the police complaint process, clarified the campus emergency telephone contact procedures, and regularly solicited comments and concerns about campus safety from the university community. The Special Visit team learned that a formal assessment process evaluating the effectiveness of this committee is not yet in place, and urges the university to develop and implement an assessment plan for this important committee.

The CPP Special Visit Report and materials identified high rates of satisfaction with affinity programs that did not align to the direct equity gap measures for the campus, suggesting that more refined studies with direct measures may help to clarify these interpretations. As discussed in greater depth under Recommendation 4 on assessment, the institutional priorities to

eliminate equity gaps and to improve graduation rates among all students by 2025, based on the system-wide GI 2025 initiative, would benefit from multiple student success metrics and the use of assessment findings that have potential DEI impacts for subsequent academic and co-curricular planning. It was noted from one interviewee that "there was a piece missing for GI 2025 because knowing who students are, how they addressed microaggressions in the classroom, and what interventions helped them to persist were critical to get them to graduation."

Among students, CPP diversity is evident in its undergraduate demographics, but less so in the graduate demographics. During the Special Visit, multiple students cited examples of how they engaged in DEI opportunities on the campus, most readily through interest and cultural affinity groups. In general, students commented positively about CPP being committed to diversity, visible signs that they were welcome on campus, and the different types of engagement offered to meet cultural needs.

Among faculty, hiring data suggested some downturns among newly hired women faculty and faculty identifying as Black/African American compared to percentages in 2022. Overall, these trends raised questions for the Special Visit team about the relationship between faculty structural diversity and oversight of equity in faculty hiring. It is notable that Ethnic Studies Cluster hires exhibit substantial diversity, but these trends eclipsed any broader representation of women and faculty identifying as Black/African American who were hired at department levels, where the bulk of new appointments occurred. The Special Visit team could find no current assessments of the impacts for learning from this cluster hire initiative, and no funding options currently identified to permanently institutionalize this or any related faculty diversity hiring initiative.

Comments from Senate and other faculty members underscored the importance of consulting with equity liaisons and using funding from faculty affairs to post jobs in culturally relevant recruitment outlets (e.g., Directory of Participants in the Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program). However, the current practices requiring Student Success Statements from faculty candidates, while laudable, have not been assessed for efficacy related to faculty structural diversity or impacts related to student learning. This evolution would be similar across other institutions of higher education, so CPP is not alone in this emerging effort. The Special Visit team recognized the importance of diversifying faculty who serve a broader, more diverse student population, and believed that deeper study about the cluster hiring's impacts and use of these findings would facilitate more comprehensive DEI planning and curriculum development.

During the Special Visit team meeting with students, a student commented that "staff members were the biggest thing creating the experience here" and illustrated how staff members were typically the first important contacts for students. It is particularly noteworthy that CPP demonstrated multiple initiatives in place for promoting cultural competencies among staff, including engagement in a campus-wide Inclusive Excellence Council focused on DEI and staff development as part of a Racial Justice and Cultural Humility Learning Series (Special Visit Report, pp. 9-11). The recent staff assessments conducted within student affairs suggested that further training would be beneficial to recognize the nuanced needs and potential interventions required to support diverse students (Special Visit Report, p. 14). Student affairs interviewees expressed an urgency in linking campus climate and diversity issues to student support services and the classroom environment. As an example, some students recommended greater flexibility around scheduling of testing accommodations so as to avoid missing meeting times for other courses. In addition to facilitating the recruitment of an Ombudsperson (targeted to be completed

by spring 2024), the recently organized People, Culture, and Institutional Affairs (PCIA) unit under the Office of the President has provided CPP with the opportunity for a more interconnected and responsive structure for DEI work among staff and faculty. PCIA was designed by the president in recognition of the increased complexity of DEI work that necessitated having a structure beyond compliance issues. Clear objectives and assessment of the effectiveness of this new unit would be of great value to the campus.

While participation counts were available for some programs (e.g., Excellence, Determination, Growth Evolution, Management Training Program, Faculty Learning Community on Leadership Development, and Dean Onboarding Retreat Series), such data provided limited insights regarding impact on participants and the broader campus community. Tracking impact of these advancement programs on participants and disaggregation of data by gender, race, and ethnicity was limited. Such an assessment would be foundational to understanding the merits and benefits of these initiatives for staff and faculty development. Moreover, it would be important to explore the next phases of DEI work in this area to recognize the skills developed from these initiatives, and this may translate into new structures for the respective staff and faculty merit systems. The Special Visit team encourages CPP to examine how culturally expansive leaders advance within the organization, and the degree to which laudable programs, such as the Management Training Program, facilitates not only career advancement, but also program and institutional innovations.

CPP has clearly demonstrated public commitment and messaging across its broad organization and community in ways that connect institutional DEI priorities in principles and practice across the organization. The candid self-assessment on these multiple fronts also included helpful and transparent insights about DEI efforts (e.g., the Commitment to Action

webpage). Development of a Black Thriving Initiative in direct response to Inclusive Campus Survey Results to support Black constituents at CPP exemplified a tangible commitment to long-term DEI activities on the campus. However, the Special Visit team encourages establishing a comprehensive assessment effort to show the progress of DEI work, including assessment and use of results, on its public webpages and in broader communications, planning, and programming. Such actions would clarify language and definitions used in DEI efforts as well as "close the loop" by reflecting on continuous improvement and follow up.

The Special Visit team noted a missed opportunity to continually update the campus about DEI progress clearly and effectively. For example, the link to the Excellence, Determination, Growth Evolution, Management Training Program in the Special Visit report, was broken and the host of DEI initiatives on the campus are not prominently displayed on the campus homepages. Expanding public communications to show how future climate survey findings and intervention assessments are used in planning, programming, and resource allocations would be important milestones to further engage the CPP community in DEI initiatives. In tandem with structural diversity indicators, these assessments would inform understanding about more robust and influential relationships to outcomes for students, faculty, and staff.

Recommendation 2: Leadership

"Develop and implement a sustainable approach to fill interim leadership positions with permanent staff and faculty. The campus community, including students, will benefit from a comprehensive communication strategy that establishes clarity of purpose and invites engagement with these new roles or departments. (CFR 3.1, 3.6)"

In February 2020, the Commission asked CPP to address issues related to the significant number of vacancies among key leadership positions, specifically to "develop and implement a sustainable approach to fill interim leadership positions with permanent staff and faculty." Since that time, the CPP has made some advances in this area despite facing very challenging external and internal influences.

Immediately following receipt of the 2020 Commission letter, the university, like the rest of the country, was severely challenged by the unexpected worldwide pandemic. The pandemic had huge effects on all aspects of the university including leadership recruitment and retention. Furthermore, the pandemic greatly reduced the state funding allocation to the university and student enrollment, both of which caused a significant budget deficit that required staff adjustments. Either resulting from or coincidental with the pandemic, the university experienced the national chill in the recruitment of management, staff, and faculty. The Special Visit team was sympathetic to this context when evaluating progress made since 2019.

The team found it difficult to assess whether the challenges with leadership stability have been successfully addressed, particularly on the academic side of the university (CFR 3.1). Of the eight academic college deans, one was interim as of the October 2023 team visit, five assumed their positions in July 2023, one in July 2022, and only one has been in position for more than two years. A few weeks before the team's arrival, it was announced that the provost departed from her post after only eighteen months in office and an interim provost had been appointed. The interim provost and vice president for academic affairs will be temporarily vacating her role as the associate provost for student success. There have been five individuals serving as provost since 2015. Leadership transitions are common, but the time proximity

between the arrival of new deans with the departure of the permanent provost has likely been unsettling for the campus.

In the president's cabinet, two of the eight cabinet members are interim (provost and vice president for academic affairs, vice president for university advancement). Within the office of the provost, of the eight senior leaders other than academic college deans, four are interim and one position is vacant.

At CPP, when senior leaders leave, the position is usually filled with an interim appointee, in some cases for multiple years. Campus policy 1310 entitled "Policy on Management Personnel Plan (MPP) Appointments" dictates that academic and administrative senior-level searches are undertaken by committees largely made up of tenure-line faculty selected by the academic senate executive committee. The requirements of this policy, when combined with the typically nine-month appointments and complex schedules of multiple faculty, can make it challenging to schedule search committee meetings. As a result, leadership searches often take much more time than would be optimal.

The team observed that communications related to changes in senior campus leadership continue to be problematic. During interviews, the team noted some apprehension resulting from the recent sudden departure of the provost, which was announced via campus email along with the appointment of the interim provost. The team understood that the provost transition was a personnel matter outside the team's lines of inquiry. However, campus interviews suggested that the email notifications and subsequent communication did not reassure the university community of positive future efforts to deal with potential disruption and instability from this leadership transition (CFR 3.11).

The president has undertaken initiatives to improve collaboration and trust amongst her leadership team including holding periodic retreats and having a consultant facilitate team exercises aimed at improving collaboration. Based on interviews with the leadership team who participated in the retreats and exercises, there were widely different views on whether these activities had their intended effect. The review team urges the university to assess the effectiveness of the efforts to improve leadership collaboration and trust that will lead to ongoing improvement (CFR 3.2 and CFR 3.3)

Even with all the new appointments, CPP continues to experience turnover of important positions. The team has no data, however, if this is pronounced at CPP relative to the broader phenomenon in higher education and other sectors of the U.S. economy. No evidence exists that CPP is doing anything egregious that might cause an unusually high turnover, and they appear to have put in place processes to respond to the hiring challenges. For instance, the university inaugurated the People, Culture, and Institutional Affairs (PCIA) unit within the office of the president aimed at "…bolstering employees' sense of belonging on campus, creating equitable work conditions, managing performance feedback, enhancing training and development, building clear pathways for advancement and improving general wellbeing and engagement." The effectiveness of PCIA and realignment of these units under the office of the president is unknown at the time of our visit. The team is not aware of any plan to assess PCIA and urges the university to assess this unit to ensure quality improvements across the university.

On the academic side, the university provides a longstanding program entitled Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Leadership Development to support tenured and tenure-track faculty interested in leadership. The Office of the Provost also organizes the Dean Onboarding

Retreat Series to support incoming deans. After interviewing the deans, the onboarding process appears to be well regarded by the participants.

Recommendation 3: Learning Outcomes

> *"Develop a structure to establish relationships among program learning outcomes,*
> *general education learning outcomes, and institutional learning outcomes.*
> *(CFR 2.1, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 4.1, 4.3)"*

In 2019, the review team found it difficult to understand the relative importance of and interrelationships among program learning outcomes, general education learning outcomes, and institutional learning outcomes. At the time of the 2019 visit, CPP had 12 Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that overlapped with 14 General Education Student Learning Outcomes (GE-SLOs), and local program-level Student Learning Outcomes showed little explicit alignment to either ILOs or GE-SLOs. Furthermore, these ILOs were not institution-wide given the existence of another independent set of four graduate institutional learning outcomes (GILOs). Based on their findings, the 2019 review team developed the above recommendation, which was formally endorsed in the 2020 WSCUC Action Letter.

Since then, CPP has made substantial progress on this recommendation in two major ways: At the institutional level, the 12 ILOs and four GILOs of 2019 have been replaced by a new set of eight Institutional Learning Goals (ILGs) for all undergraduate and graduate programs that are directly based on the eight elements of an inclusive polytechnic education defined in the Academic Master Plan. Based on discussions during the Special Visit, this terminological shift from "outcomes" to "goals" appears intended to reduce "outcome fatigue" and to reify and reinforce CPP's eight polytechnic elements as a means to encourage faculty review, refinement, and alignment of their local program learning outcomes and related curricula. Technically, the

Academic Senate still needs to formally ratify these ILGs for graduate programs, but this was widely presented as a formality scheduled for spring 2024.

Similarly, with respect to General Education, the 14 GE-SLOs of 2019 have been replaced with a set of seven GE-SLOs based on the five WSCUC Core Competencies and two additional outcomes focused on civic literacy and intercultural engagement. The review team notes that, concurrent with this re-envisioning of general education outcomes, CPP has shown steady progress in its assessment of the five WSCUC core competencies from 2019 through 2023 (e.g., 2019 and 2023 common-rubric-based analyses of randomly-selected student written works; 2020 common-rubric-based analysis of a multicomponent quantitative reasoning quiz, etc.). This recent adoption of the WSCUC Core Competencies as GE-SLOs should promote a greater awareness of, and perhaps more localized approaches to, their future assessment for student learning, development, and achievement. Plans to assess the GE-SLOs of civic literacy and intercultural engagement were not explicitly discussed, but the review team anticipated that the campus will start assessing these in the near future and prior to the next Accreditation Visit.

During the Special Visit, discussions with various faculty, staff, and administrators revealed a generally clear and shared understanding of, and broad satisfaction with, this new assessment structure, and many believed it will facilitate the broader assessment process moving forward. Furthermore, a cursory examination of some recent program reviews demonstrated a clear understanding of the relationships among local program learning outcomes and these new ILGs and GE-SLOs. As this new structure is fully implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year, the institution will benefit from seeking timely stakeholder feedback to inform communications and identify refinements.

Recommendation 4: Assessment

"Articulate how assessment results from programs, general education, and student affairs

provide evidence of meeting institutional learning outcomes. These assessment efforts

and results should be combined with institutional data to explicitly understand

the relationship between student learning and student

success. (CFR 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.13)"

Assessment of student learning in higher education provides fundamental information about the extent to which stated learning priorities are achieved for student and institutional success. Guidance from the WSCUC 2013 Accreditation Handbook underscored the efficacy of institutional engagement in "sustained, evidence-based, and participatory self-reflection" to achieve educational priorities (WSCUC 2013 Accreditation Handbook, Standard 4). The CPP Special Visit Report (p. 26) presented several actions taken to respond to the commission's concerns in 2019.

CPP reported major structural changes that created a new framework, streamlined learning goals to demonstrate alignments between academic plans and student outcomes, deepened faculty engagement in these efforts, and enhanced management learning systems and resources for data collection and accessibility. Co-curricular assessment has evolved to include a divisional plan for data collection and institutional studies that are currently underway. CPP has invested in institutional training, data collection, and analysis support to streamline institutional and program assessment, and this work is coordinated by the Office of Assessment and Program Review (OAPR) for academic affairs and the Office of Assessment, Data, and Evaluation (ADE) for student affairs. Major metrics for the predominant institutional priorities associated with the CSU-wide Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI2025) as well as such indicators of student progress

and units completed, number of D/F/W grades, etc., have been showcased in accessible institutional dashboards created by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Analytics (IRPA). CPP faculty and staff members who were interviewed during the Special Visit commented that these additions have made assessment "approachable and relevant," even if a few members characterized assessment as "filled with buzzwords and jargon." It is clear from the interviews, Special Visit report and additional materials that faculty have broadened their engagement and find the templates and support helpful to drill down to the important work of assessing what students know and how they know it (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 4.1).

CPP's prioritization to increase graduation rates as part of GI 2025 has informed its six key metrics of student success: freshman four-year and six-year graduation rates, transfer two-year and four-year graduation rates, and differences between the overall graduation rates and rates for target populations (historically underrepresented ethnic and racial minorities, Pell grant recipients, and first-generation college enrollees). CPP, as well as other campuses in the system, launched their GI 2025 efforts in 2015 and current trends showed fluctuating success for increasing overall graduation rates while reducing equity gaps in graduation rates for target populations.

Ongoing institutional analyses were used to correct degree audit problems and to implement additional interventions, such as peer mentoring for students identified through an early alert system and centralized advising structures. These actions illustrated why 'closing the loop' to use assessment results in planning and programming were critical to continuous improvement for student learning. While campus attention is "laser-focused" on GI 2025, significant assessment attention will also be required to continue progress on assessment and use of findings for the seven General Education Student Learning Outcomes (GE-SLOs), program

review streamlining, and co-curricular assessment. As one interviewee stated "students have intersectional identities and are engaged in multiple initiatives, so it may be most important to ensure that these efforts are performing well or students will not reach the GI 2025 targets." Additionally, several student interviewees communicated how negative experiences and incorrect information from academic advisors had lengthened time to degree or forced students to rely on peers or affinity groups for academic guidance. These student experiences in particular suggested that CPP may need to undertake more rigorous and nuanced examinations of the efficacy of institutional interventions.

The Special Visit team agreed that CPP has navigated a lengthy and thoughtful process to engage stakeholders in aligning GE-SLOs to the Academic Master Plan and in scheduling relevant annual processes for review of these student outcomes. As discussed in the previous section, five of the seven GE-SLOs, which align with WASC Core Competencies, have been evaluated: information literacy and written communication (2019), quantitative reasoning (2020), oral communication (2021), critical thinking skills (2022), and written communication (2023). These results suggested effective assessment based on direct and indirect evidence. While seniors had achieved proficiencies across the five outcomes, there were interesting variances. For example, the highest proficiencies were demonstrated in oral and written communications, the lowest proficiencies were demonstrated in critical thinking skills, and the most varied proficiencies were demonstrated in quantitative reasoning and information literacy based on additional materials requested prior to the Special Visit. The reflection questions for interpreting results provided strong templates for inquiry and a sound addition to the assessment process. However, results suggested that additional, perhaps more central, discussions would be

helpful to follow up and "close the assessment loop" for determining next planning and action steps.

CPP has made significant progress in developing its assessment process for program review of academic departments and for divisional assessment planning in student affairs. Discussions during the Special Visit with the Academic Senate and faculty representatives indicated extensive consultation during the revamping of the program review process, resulting in a more streamlined and meaningful process as well as flexibility to tailor program review templates and processes to best align to program contexts and what will be meaningful to the local faculty (Special Visit Report, p. 32).

Faculty interviewed during the Special Visit generally supported the recent program review changes, including the abbreviated program reviews for professionally accredited degrees, though a few seasoned faculty voiced concerns that budgets may be diminished "based on narrow interpretations from the reviews" rather than program quality and other aspects. For example, a faculty member stated concerns that a program serving as a "valuable bridge to Ph.D. programs for a largely Hispanic population would probably be branded as a money loser" with potential negative funding consequences. A few faculty also commented that budget constraints to limit tenure lines in the face of supporting program evidence was demotivating. While the subsequent section of this report discusses program review in greater detail, the briefer examination of process and effectiveness here suggested that follow-up conversations and brainstorming may be effective to strengthen collaborative "closing of the assessment loop' after the labor-intensive program review process. Even if budget constraints limit some actions suggested by the reviews, pursuing such discussions could identify other administrative options.

Co-curricular assessment centered within student affairs has clearly evolved beyond demographics and program attendance. Data is anticipated to be collected from departments and analyzed robustly to examine factors influencing holistic success (student progression, retention, and graduation, and personal, civic, and professional growth) and experiences, as well as staffing and inclusion (Special Visit materials, Appendix 4a). The current student affairs divisional plan has elevated the examination of holistic student experiences and raised the bar for promising studies about the impacts of many visible interventions and programs, including the Black Thriving Initiative workshops among others. The assessment plan, still to be fully implemented, includes important metrics for direct and indirect assessment. The Special Visit team agreed that the plan was exemplary and illustrated the interdependent nature of the whole student experience that could not be divorced from academic learning. These efforts also broadened definitions of success to measure aspects of belonging, mental health, and well-being—all potential malleable factors that influence retention, degree completion, and non-cognitive skills critical to student health and welfare.

Finally, assessment practices related to graduate student learning were the most nascent, with an institutional plan and process for graduate student assessment (Special Visit Report, p. 34). While a more detailed discussion of the Graduate Institutional Learning Outcomes and associated plans are covered later in this report, clear groundwork has been laid to align graduate student learning with the broader CPP assessment framework. A major consideration for CPP going forward would be to identify what resources from the Graduate Studies Office have had the greatest impacts on graduate student development and outcomes, and how those programs will be sustained, assessed, and continuously improved going forward, particularly as externally funded opportunities sunset in 2025.

Overall, CPP has demonstrated substantive ways to advance a culture of assessment and evidence review at all levels of its organization. The tools and staff resources were integral in supporting this work and included launch pad reports, training opportunities, and other tangible practices that promoted trust in data systems and a culture of inquiry to promote student learning.

The Special Visit team encourages CPP to fund continued innovations for rigorous student affairs assessment, and to reward the use of assessment evidence in visible ways, perhaps through additional grants, awards, and merit considerations of these competencies among faculty and staff.

Recommendation 5: Program Review

"Adopt the improvements proposed to the University Senate by the Office of Assessment and

Program Review (OAPR) to make program review more meaningful and manageable.

OAPR should integrate overall assessment results as part of a

program's evaluation. (CFR 2.7, 4.1. 4.3)"

In fall 2020, the CPP Academic Senate adopted (with minor revisions) the proposed policy improvements mentioned in the above 2019 recommendation, and, by spring 2021, had identified nine academic departments for 2021-2022 program reviews under the new policies. To ensure faculty remained at the core of the process, the senate established a Program Review Committee (PRC) in fall 2021 that is co-chaired by the Academic Senate appointee from the Academic Programs Committee and Faculty Fellow for Program Review, and includes faculty representatives from each college who receive OAPR-led professional development and training. Once this initial 2021-2022 cohort of programs had completed their reviews, the PRC collected feedback that refined the committee's roles and responsibilities and the program review processes (e.g., lines of inquiry, workflow, templates). The subsequent 2022-2023 cohort

included five academic departments (four of whom completed the process), and the most recently launched 2023-2024 cohort includes eight academic departments who are currently finalizing their self-studies for external and internal review during spring 2024. In spring 2022, OAPR also established an "abbreviated" process for professionally (externally) accredited programs designed to reduce redundancies while ensuring continued program alignment with CPP's mission, vision, and values, but only a few programs have taken this path to date. These advances and improvement in program review have been supported by a doubling of OAPR resources and a tripling of its personnel since 2017.

During the Special Visit, conversations with faculty involved in recent program review described their preparation and experience as positive with a greater sense of engagement and meaning, with some noting opportunities for continued improvements, such as more consistent uses of terminology among OAPR and other offices. A progressive reduction in faculty turnover on the PRC was interpreted to reflect better training and support and a more meaningful time investment. Like many institutions, the most common local outcome of program reviews was the need for additional tenure-track faculty; CPP may want to consider how to manage expectations around this issue with their programs as well as internal and external reviewers.

Based on the CPP Special Visit Report, examination of recent program reviews, and interviews of campus members, CPP has clearly made significant progress in improving the program review process and using its results to make meaningful program improvements. An ongoing conversation around maintaining process consistency while increasing local program utility reflects a healthy commitment to meaningful and actionable program review. Moving forward, CPP is encouraged to continue promoting the integration of program assessment data in this process, to ensure that action plans are developed and followed-through on for all programs,

and to closely monitor the outcomes and utility of the relatively new abbreviated program review for professionally accredited programs.

Recommendation 6: Graduate Programs

"Create a sustainable institutional plan and process for the

development, assessment, support, and resourcing of graduate programs,

building upon current graduate institutional learning outcomes and ensuring

that graduate students have ready access to student services. (CFR 2.2b, 2.4, 2.13)"

CPP's 2018 Academic Master Plan included a suite of goals designed to support and strengthen graduate programs, and their 2018 Institutional Report presented progress and opportunities on a subset of these goals (i.e., defining mission, vision, and goals of graduate studies; building institutional capacity and student services; developing graduate-level institutional learning outcomes). Based on these documents and findings from the 2019 Accreditation Visit, the WSCUC issued a graduate-program-focused recommendation for inclusion in this 2023 Special Visit. In their 2023 Special Visit Report, CPP presents progress on three general areas with respect to this recommendation: Expansion of graduate student support services, adoption of a streamlined set of Institutional Learning Outcomes, and development of a strategic plan for sustainable development of campus graduate programs. Each of these areas are described below along with broader findings from the report and visit.

Since the 2019 visit, CPP has substantially expanded graduate student support, in large part through a DOE Title V Part B grant entitled *Leverage Opportunities for Graduate Research and Resources* (LOGRAR). This grant supported the 2020 establishment of the Graduate Resource Center (GRC) within the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) as a virtual one-stop shop for graduate support services during the pandemic, with subsequent expansion to face-to-face

operations in 2021. The GRC is currently staffed by a full-time program coordinator and full-time graduate advisor, and supports a peer mentoring program, faculty-led tutoring in English and quantitative analysis, faculty mentoring for graduate instruction, and various workshops and events. Additional efforts to expand graduate student support include development of a no-cost asynchronous online course on graduation policies, the awarding of 50 $5,000 scholarships to low-income graduate students, $150,000 of new funding for conference travel and disciplinary equipment available through library reserves, and, in collaboration with the Center for Advancement of Faculty Excellence, a three-day Emerging Teaching Professionals Academy for graduate students in Summer 2022 and 2023. The review team views these efforts as laudable and encourages their strategic assessment to demonstrate recent impacts, refine future programming, and seek continued internal funding after external funding ends in 2025 following a one-year no-cost-extension.

As discussed in Recommendation 3, 4 and 5 of this report, CPP recently ratified a new set of Institutional Learning Goals (ILGs) for undergraduate programs that reflect their institutional commitment to providing an inclusive polytechnic experience. These ILGs were endorsed for graduate programs by the Graduate Council in spring 2023, and are scheduled for similar ratification by the Academic Senate in fall 2023, which will provide a truly institution-wide framework to inform and guide localized curriculum development and program assessment. A review of assessment materials for a small selection of graduate programs shows outcomes-based assessment data, findings, and actions largely focused at the course level, and the review team encourages the campus to ensure ongoing assessment infrastructure development supports the distinctive nature and needs of graduate degrees (e.g, relatively limited coursework, often low class enrollments, substantial summative works such as theses, portfolios, performances, etc.).

Similarly, as additional graduate programs go through the recently streamlined program review process, care should be taken to assess the degree to which this process serves the particular curricular and infrastructure needs of various graduate programs. Comments from interviewees suggested that maintaining current graduate programs and growing new graduate programs will require consideration of multiple impacts beyond simple program size. For example, additional resources may be needed for clinical graduate programs with specific licensure requirements, which are currently funded "no differently than undergraduate programs, which necessitates running graduate programs on the backs of undergraduate programs." Conversations around such challenges and opportunities around graduate program assessment and graduate program review are reportedly underway among the Graduate Student Office and the Office of Assessment and Program Review to support graduate student learning, development, and success.

In Summer 2022, the Executive Graduate Council developed a draft Graduate Student Office strategic plan (see Appendix 6b of Special Visit Report) with three goals: support and improve educational outcomes for existing programs, continue to advocate for institutional graduate program support, and support and guide the development of new graduate and post-baccalaureate programs. The Special Visit Report describes this developing GSO strategic plan, which includes four footnoted references to the Academic Master Plan, as the "the key to future (graduate) planning." In light of the 2019 recommendation on integrated planning, the evolving GSO strategic plan would be strengthened by (1) aligning its goals, strategies, and tactics with relevant aspects of the university-wide Strategic Plan 2017-2025 and (2) exploring how relevant goals, strategies, and tactics could be incorporated into ongoing program assessment and program review. In multiple sessions during the visit, the review team noted broad appreciation of the key role of the Faculty Director of Graduate Studies in supporting and

coordinating graduate program development and support, and strong support for elevating representation of graduate studies within the institution in the future, perhaps in the form of a dean of graduate studies. The review team also noted that the institution has shifted focus over the years between developing largely state-support and self-support graduate programs, and an interest in developing a shared understanding of the anticipated focus moving forward given growing concerns around future campus enrollment targets.

Recommendation 7: Integrated Planning

"Complete the Campus Master Plan and Information Technology Plan, and integrate these with the Academic Master Plan and Strategic Plan, including mechanisms for monitoring progress and achievement. The university should further enhance its budget and financial planning processes to ensure that these prioritized institutional goals are appropriately funded. (CFR 3.4, 4.7)"

CPP completed a comprehensive "Strategic Plan 2017-2025" in 2017. According to multiple campus leaders, the president often references the strategic plan. School and division initiatives are expected to derive from the strategic plan, and budget allocations are also largely based on it. Leadership attention was understandably diverted during the pandemic from implementing strategic plan initiatives to responding to the pandemic health and fiscal impacts. Post-pandemic, leadership has refocused on strategic plan implementation. While the pace of plan implementation is limited by funding availability, CPP does appear to be moving initiatives forward as fast as it can.

While university leaders spoke to the Special Visit team about progress on strategic plan initiatives, there are no updates about progress or accomplishments on the strategic plan website. For example, each element of the strategic plan includes metrics for measuring success, but the

team could not find any public dashboards or reports on any of these metrics, though visit discussions with various parties revealed substantive progress on many fronts. The review team sees this is a lost opportunity for celebrating progress while focusing attention around ongoing yet-unmet objectives.

CPP recently completed the Campus Master Plan, submitted it to the CSU Chancellor's Office, and initiated the Environmental Impact Review (EIR) process. The CPP Master Plan is incorporated into the CSU Five-Year Plan 2024/25 through 2028/29. Information technology initiatives are largely incorporated into the annual budget planning process.

CPP has a robust budget planning process that integrates the state appropriations process with campus prioritization process. College-specific priorities are developed by each dean, discussed among the deans and provost, and prioritized by the Provost. Each university division identifies and communicates its own priorities, which are then discussed and prioritized by the cabinet. Once state appropriations are known, the president makes final budget allocations in consultation with the cabinet. Those decisions are discussed with the Academic Senate budget committee and shared more broadly with the campus community.

The above findings, based on the CPP's Special Visit Report and various discussions during the team's visit, indicated that CPP has addressed this recommendation in a meaningful and intentional manner, and demonstrates clear intentions to continue this approach to integrated planning in the future.

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE

Not Applicable.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As demonstrated in the CPP Special Visit Report and confirmed and clarified during the Special Visit, CPP embraced this Special Visit process as an opportunity to reflect upon their progress on each of the seven recommendations from the 2019 Reaffirmation of Accreditation process and to candidly present their progress and future priorities for each recommendation. Based on their evaluation of submitted materials and interactions with the campus community, the review team identified the following CPP accomplishments and practices as particularly worthy of commendation:

1. Committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a fundamental value in educational and societal development by focusing on DEI in its mission statement, strategic plans, and established structures, such as the campus-wide Inclusive Excellence Council and Office of Inclusive Excellence.

2. Adopting the eight elements of an inclusive polytechnic education as Institutional Learning Goals for all undergraduate and graduate programs, and developing General Education Student Learning Outcomes that address civic literacy, intercultural engagement, and the five WSCUC Core Competencies,

3. Aligning ILGs, GE-SLOs, and Program Learning Outcomes in ways that make assessment more meaningful and engaging for faculty.

4. Leveraging the Strategic Plan to drive key initiatives and budget priorities.

5. Highlighting the importance of including both academic and co-curricular student learning outcomes in the assessment structure, thereby broadening the definition of student success beyond graduation rates to include student sense of belonging, well-being, and mental health.

6. Working diligently to recruit and hire five academic dean appointments and developing a robust onboarding process for new deans and other administrators.

Based also on their evaluation of submitted materials and interactions with the campus community, the review team identified the following recommendations to CPP:

1. Communicate progress and accomplishments relating to the Strategic Plan 2017-2025 to foster shared understanding and appreciation (e.g., on the Strategic Plan website).

2. Examine the effectiveness of multiple DEI committees, which could lead to consolidation and enhance shared funding and collaborative actions to achieve the university's DEI priorities.

3. Develop robust assessment of DEI initiatives and use the results to close academic equity gaps, improve climate, and promote greater equity in the recruitment of faculty, staff, and graduate students.

4. Complete proposed program reviews of student co-curricular learning and use the assessment results to inform programming including planning, program design and resource allocation.

5. Examine the policies and processes for recruiting and hiring senior leaders to identify opportunities for more expeditious hiring.

6. Develop and implement more effective communications to inform the campus about leadership changes and vacancies.