

# CSUN ANNUAL PLANNING CYCLE GUIDELINES

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### A. Planning overview:

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

#### The time line:

- ✓ ***Spring to fall:*** Administration and Finance (including Facilities and Human Resources), Advancement, Extended Learning, Academic Personnel, Institutional Research, GRIP/Undergraduate Studies, and Information Technology prepare scans of the internal and external environment for program planning. These scans emerge out of discussions with the divisions, the schools, and, when appropriate, the cabinet.

Information Technology and each division and school will meet during the fall semester to identify planning strategies that require significant new or enhanced technology, allowing IT enough time to work with the division and schools to identify the options and costs, and in turn plan and budget accordingly.

- ✓ ***Late summer to fall:*** the President issues the charge to the campus to plan annually, with a time line. Typically, this charge reflects the mission, vision, values, and presidential priorities, mediated by current events and the results of ongoing assessments.
- ✓ ***Late fall and winter:*** Divisions develop their annual plans for the next fiscal year. Reports should not exceed ten to fifteen pages.
- ✓ ***Spring:*** The Vice-Presidents, deans, and directors synthesize these views in consultation with the governance committees.

- ✓ **Early summer:** The President responds; the Cabinet reconciles differences.

**B. The five planning priorities are**

1. **academic excellence:** we aim for excellence that is sustained by self-examination;
2. **student engagement and success:** we work to retain and graduate students by fostering social cohesion;
3. **campus and community collaborations:** we not only value diversity, community alliances, and accessible services, but also we act on those values;
4. **user-friendly business processes:** we strive for effective and efficient organizational and transactional practices;
5. **revenue enhancement:** we identify and pursue opportunities to enhance the University's resources in ways that support the mission.

Each division will address the goals that are appropriate to it in the *lingua franca* of the division. Planning leaders, working with the appropriate committees, will insure that, when the annual plans are finalized, the *lingua franca* yields to the nomenclature in the planning priorities. Each division also must demonstrate how it assesses the effectiveness of its plans—and especially their impact on student learning and engagement. In turn, divisions will generate plans that are informed by previous assessments. Priorities must link to budgeting. Calls against new funds must distinguish temporary from permanent expenditures, they must identify entailed costs to other divisions, and they must indicate how the requests relate to plans to re-purpose existing resources.

**C. Effective annual planning** has these traits:

1. multiple opportunities for operational and governance committees to question and revise assumptions, first, and to question and make recommendations about tactics and strategies, second;
2. a connection between division plans and actions, on the one hand, and University priorities, on the other;
3. the participation by stakeholders who are not inundated by reporting requirements;
4. the use of evidence to explain plans—and the changes that they project. Evidence should emerge primarily from responses to the indices and benchmarks—like the departments' assessment reports, program reviews, and the *CSU Accountability Reports*—that already have been designed for that purpose. However, scans of the organization's needs and of external influences are reasonable, as well;

5. results that are reasonable, given the projected constraints of the CSU General Fund budget, changes in mandatory costs, and capital outlays for physical projects, etc. There must be clear linkage between priorities and budget requests and evidence.
6. identification of the linkages and dependencies of plans across divisions. For example, an academic division that is pursuing a strategy with significant facilities or technology dependencies must consult with those divisions to synchronize plans.

#### **D. 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, division management council, and/or a designated faculty and/or staff committees—must decide on the best way to gather information.
3. The college or division consults with Advancement, the Library, Facilities, Information Technology, and other University departments when their expertise and resources are inferred.
4. The division’s plan has been reviewed by the highest-level committee that approves curriculum, budget, and/or programs in the college or equivalent division.

#### **E. Planning inputs:**

1. **Funding:** The major funding sources are:
  - a. State funds that come to us in association with enrollment and, therefore, change as FTES changes (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, as through the Lottery.
  - d. funds that we re-purpose: salary savings through retirements, administrative efficiencies, curricular changes as examples.
  - e. funds that come to us through grants, contracts, fundraising, or other sources of revenue enhancement.

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 other campus departments, administrators, and committees.

3. **Structure and Infrastructure:** We rely on both Administration and Finance and Information Technology for an overview of facilities, services, and technology. Before the campus plans, it will receive scans from these areas on these and related topics
4. **Entrepreneurialism:** Increasingly, we must be entrepreneurs. As a result, the divisions must integrate into their planning forecasts from Extended Learning, Advancement, GRIP, Human Resources, and Academic Personnel.

**F. Process:**

Guided by the University mission, values, and planning priorities (in B above), as charged by the President, each division will:

1. establish an annual planning time line,
2. develop a planning template that aligns with the President's charge and the principles, however nested, in D,
3. use assessment to support initiatives, basing change on evidence, and
4. link budget requests to priorities.

## Specific Planning Instructions for Academic Affairs

In Academic Affairs, each college/division begins by reviewing the commitments for this year; see [http://www.csun.edu/academic.affairs/academic\\_planningCR\\_preface.pdf](http://www.csun.edu/academic.affairs/academic_planningCR_preface.pdf). After that, follow this format:

1. **MISSION:** Briefly explain how your annual plan relates to the college/division's mission/vision. Take this opportunity to synthesize, so that we understand the overall intent behind the proposals.
2. **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE—**
  - a. **ASSESSMENT:** Summarize the progress that the college/division has made in assessment: setting benchmarks and outcomes, gathering direct evidence of student learning, and using the results to inform change. Discuss obstacles that have arisen or that loom ahead; if possible, suggest solutions.
  - b. **LEARNER-CENTERED UNIVERSITY:** CSUN faculty and staff are developing learner-centered strategies that adapt to the various paces at which students learn and the different sizes and formats of classes. They use, when appropriate, new media for these and other purposes. Summarize efforts and lessons learned; indicate plans ahead.
  - c. **RESEARCH/CREATIVE ACTIVITY:** Colleges/divisions should summarize major achievements. Then they should indicate plans for major grants and contracts which address regional needs, employ students as research assistants, advance efforts in K-16, or require University matches or space. Indicate which efforts require changes in RPT or training in such areas as contract and risk management. Finally where such activities have lead to social or academic change, please describe.
  - d. **PROGRAMS:** There is no need to describe incremental change due to growth. Rather, tell which programs you plan to discontinue or start up and why. For instance, describe progress toward implementing applied, regional MA and PhD-equivalent degrees; or, explain the evidence for major changes in undergraduate programs. If you are engaging significantly in self-support programs, explain the strategies for enrollment and financial management. Please indicate whether any plans require physical modifications to buildings, technology that affects campus infrastructure, change in RPT or management practices.
3. **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS:** Describe your current and future plans to improve first-to-second year retention rate for students, as well as persistence in the out-years and transition to post collegiate schooling or work. Indicate, too, efforts under way—and lessons learned—supporting students in difficult courses. Finally, describe

efforts to make (academic, career) advising more consistent and advising materials easier to understand and more accessible.

4. **CAMPUS/COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS:** Focus on those joint efforts, both on and off campus, that add value. Specify the projects, agents, results, and plans, as well as the training of personnel if appropriate. For on campus projects, indicate efforts to improve services for students, faculty, staff, and/or the public that have resulted or will result in speedier, more reliable transactions, self-help alternatives, 24/7 access, or redeploying staff to where clients are. For projects that are primarily off campus, describe the benefits, risks, and management.
5. **USER-FRIENDLY BUSINESS PROCESSES:** What progress, according to what indicators, occurred in the past year? What will be ratcheted up, and by how much, this year and next? What additional processes must be tackled—what will be the indicators of achievement?
6. **REVENUE ENHANCEMENT:** In cooperation with the self-support units, indicate the benchmarks and appropriate steps. Review, too, how the division will spend its non-general fund accounts to supplement state subsidies.