Academic Affairs Working Plan 2014-17

Strategic planning in Academic Affairs is guided by the five goals of the SJSU Strategic Plan: Vision 2017 and the planning previously done by the Academic Affairs Division that culminated in our Academic Plan 2017.

Under the direction of Provost Feinstein’s leadership, representatives of Academic Affairs have considered how best to build on the work that was done by multiple constituencies in the past two years. The planning and consultation processes to date have clarified some of our fundamental values: Academic Affairs is committed to making visible, meaningful progress to improve the experience of students, faculty, and staff at SJSU. The Academic Affairs Working Plan synthesizes our goals while bringing focus to targeted areas about which we all care deeply.

This document therefore proposes three priorities that are strategically important to and aligned with the university’s academic mission and allows us to continue to make progress on our Academic Plan 2017:

1. 21st Century Teaching and Learning Spaces
2. Educational Excellence and Student Experience
3. RSCA and Professional Development Support

Mindful of the fact that the best results are achieved with broad input distilled to a focused plan, each priority has an explanation, a preliminary list of proposed action items, and sources of input and consultation. To make this process successful, Academic Affairs relies on the assistance of colleagues throughout the university as well as the ongoing input from the Academic Plan Working Group, constituted in consultation with the Academic Senate and comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Academic Affairs seeks their advice about how to best accomplish and communicate the goals that align with the priorities listed below.
Vision 2017 Theme: 21st Century Spaces

Explanation:

The most important spaces at the university are those where faculty and students come together for the core activities of teaching and learning. Spaces for collaboration among students outside of the formal classroom are also vitally important to the university learning environment. For this reason, learning spaces of high quality are a top priority for the campus.

Learning spaces should be equipped with appropriate technology, whiteboards, furniture, climate control, and lighting to provide the optimum environment for learning. Physical classrooms, laboratories, and studios will receive top priority but we also need to address the particular needs of virtual learning spaces. Physical campus learning spaces outside of the formal classroom are necessary for student collaboration, group engagement, and interactions with faculty. These spaces must be designed and equipped to foster student success.

Action Items:

1. Make campus classroom environments as conducive to learning as possible, and provide the optimum environment within the constraints of aging facilities and limited budgets.

2. Work to equip learning spaces with appropriate technology, furniture (including accessible furniture), climate control, whiteboards and lighting to support effective learning.

3. Work to provide faculty, students, and staff with access to, training in, and knowledge about hardware and a comprehensive suite of supporting software applications that promote and improve learning and assessment.

Sources of Input and Consultation:

- Academic Senate Committee on Instruction and Student Affairs
- Academic Space Planning Committee
- Academic Technology Faculty Advisory Committee
- Academic Technology Faculty Survey Spring 2014
- Next Generation Classroom Advisory Committee
- Academic Technology e-Campus
- President’s Cabinet
- Information Technology Services
- Facilities Development & Operations
PRIORITY 2: EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Vision 2017 Theme: Unbounded Learning

Explanation:

SJSU strives to offer high-quality programs that provide a broad foundation in the knowledge and skills students need to be engaged global citizens who are prepared to succeed in the workplace. In short, we strive for educational excellence in all aspects of a student’s experience.

We see evidence, however, that many students struggle to make progress and that time-to-degree is longer than it should be. Often students are not able to secure the classes that they need when they need them or find a clear pathway through General Education and majors. As a university, we should commit to investing the appropriate resources so our students can make timely progress toward degree. We also should continue to assess our programs and academic support services to understand our students’ needs so we can ensure that every student can make progress towards a degree, credential, or certificate in a timely fashion.

Action Items:

1. Data Management for Student Success: Build, install, and refine information systems that enable us to better understand and manage student progress, advising, enrollments, and schedules to improve student experience, retention, and graduation rates for undergraduate and graduate students. Examples include the degree audit report, advisor request system, and enrollment management systems.

2. Enrollment Planning and Advising for Student Success: Ensure that our resource- and enrollment-planning models and advising practices enable students at all levels to make adequate progress towards degree and program completion.

3. Achievement Gap: Take steps to implement systems and practices that will reduce the under-represented minority student (URM) achievement gap.

4. Student experience of curriculum: Review and revise curriculum to identify ways of creating streamlined pathways through programs while supporting undergraduate and graduate student learning that aligns with SJSU’s mission and vision.

5. Admissions: Update and finalize supplemental course criteria to update our impaction plan for admissions.

6. Writing Support: Establish coordinated services for writing support with an emphasis on cross- and inter-disciplinary training and collaboration for undergraduate and graduate students.

7. Global Citizenship: Establish a campus-wide initiative for Global Citizenship to make SJSU a globally-focused university.
Sources of Input and Consultation:

- Chairs’ Councils
- Academic Senate Committee on Curriculum and Research
- Working groups for each action item
- Academic Senate Committee on Instruction and Student Affairs
- Program Planning Committee
- Undergraduate Studies Committee
- Board of General Studies
- Joint Enrollment Planning Committee
- Advising Council
- Student Academic Success Services Directors’ Council
- Academic Senate Student Success Committee
- Taskforces and others working on initiatives related to under-represented students and diversity
PRIORITY 3: RSICA AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Vision 2017 Theme: Unbounded Learning

Explanation:

Fulfillment of the educational mission of institutions of higher learning rests on the ability of its members to engage in life-long unbounded learning and continuous professional development. For faculty members, active engagement in Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities (RSCA) is a direct expression of such learning. Teaching should be informed and enriched by professors’ intellectual passions and accomplishments. Teacher-scholars who are excited about their research and creative endeavors often bring that excitement back to the classroom, lab, and studio, and is a demonstration of their ongoing investment in the learning process. Furthermore, providing opportunities for directed student research and active classroom learning is an increasingly important part of our educational mission, as is supporting staff access to professional growth and development opportunities.

We believe that every SJSU faculty member who is engaged in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) should have a balanced workload that provides adequate time and resources to fulfill the full range of their professional goals and obligations. Thus, the long-term goal is to reach and sustain a reduced teaching assignment for all RSCA-active faculty campus-wide. This is an ambitious goal but we believe we should commit to it as a way to enhance faculty members’ ability to maintain currency in their disciplines and be outstanding teacher-scholars.

Action Items:

1. Investigate processes and models developed at other CSU campuses (i.e., SDSU and SFSU) to enable RSCA-active faculty to achieve and sustain reduced teaching loads while meeting FTES goals.

2. Investigate curricular and budgetary consequences of reducing regular teaching loads for RSCA-active faculty, including the effects the proposed model would have on existing assigned time practices in the university and the colleges.

3. Examine the acquisition and use of direct and indirect (Facilities & Administrative recovery) grant awards at SJSU. Explore how to deploy indirect F&A recovery funds more effectively in support of RSCA activities. Benchmark resource levels and current practices for pre-and post-award support suitable to the size of our campus and research performance level.

4. Plan and fund faculty RSCA and professional development.
   a. Campus-wide programs: Facilitating cross-disciplinary collaborations; organizing multi-disciplinary research groups and proposal teams; holding proposal writing workshops and institutes for novice as well as more experienced researchers; providing mentoring and guidance regarding strategies for launching and sustaining successful RSCA agendas.
   b. College-specific programs: Planned and implemented by individual colleges to fit their specific needs. Examples of supported activities include: start-up
packages and research support for new faculty; transition grants for becoming RSCA-active; teaching-load reduction for RSCA-active faculty.

5. Plan and fund staff professional development and growth. Conduct a needs assessment to identify relevant target knowledge bases and skill sets, as well as effective pedagogical models for providing opportunities for professional development. Complement current opportunities offered on campus (e.g., through HR) or through the CSU.

Sources of Input and Consultation:

- Sense of the Senate Document SS-S-11-6, Support for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
- Sense of the Senate Document SS-S02-6, Alleviating Faculty Workload at SJSU
- Academic Senate Committees on Curriculum & Research and Graduate Studies and Research
- University Council of Chairs and Directors
- SJSU Research Foundation Board of Directors
- HR Users Group