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Stanislaus

June 8, 2022

Dear Commissioners:

We are excited to see that the Review Team states that SJSU has met all the standards under review and that SJSU is “[e]ngaging in forthright reflection on institutional improvement in response to previous WSCUC actions.” We appreciate the strong list of commendations, as SJSU pulls together to meet our CSU GI 2025 metrics and campus Strategic Plan goals. We also appreciate the review team recognizing our commitment to student success, regional engagement, and diversity, equity, inclusion, as well as our belonging efforts. SJSU’s student retention and graduation rates have been relatively consistent even through the pandemic. We continue to make progress in all areas, including in Title IX as mentioned in the commendations; we acknowledge we have more work to do. SJSU is in a much stronger place in 2022 than it was in 2014 and even more so since the special visit in 2017. Given the team’s strong evaluation, we only have a few comments as part of our self-reflective process of clarifying our successes and acknowledging areas for improvement.

**Staff Morale and Campus Climate:** During the last six years SJSU established a Staff Council, a suite of recognitions for staff accomplishments, and invested in staff professional development. While the Provost urged the Academic Senate to increase its staff representation, the Academic Senate manages membership. The Provost cannot add to the Senate unilaterally, even if the review team asserts that this is the case (p. 19). Ongoing conversations continue to evolve about adding more staff representation. Our location is one of the most expensive places in the world, which is out of our control. We are optimistic about a recent CSU-wide study that acknowledges the high cost of living issues, but we have no CSU-wide strategy for distributing dollars from the state to support these differentials.

We undertook a significant campus climate survey in 2020 as a follow up to multiple years of smaller efforts. Led by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), SJSU has also developed faculty and staff affinity groups and a suite of courses in implicit bias and microaggressions, including [belong@SJSU](#). Cultural Centers for Black, Latina/o/x, and APIDA students are in place and the Native American and Indigenous center soon will be. The ODEI, inaugurated in 2016, has had the same CDO since its founding. Additional resources helped to deliver on the commitment of greater inclusivity on campus. This has been paralleled by investments in other areas - a new Vice Provost for Faculty Success with experience in DEI work in 2020 and a number of racial justice professionals across campus.

The report argues the campus has not made much progress since 2014 on issues of transparency and shared governance. The review team offers mostly anecdotes when arguing that the “the books are notoriously closed” (p. 33). It is unclear if this was an opinion shared by a majority of respondents or a comment from a small group. The administration has made presentations to the Academic Senate, Council of Chairs, and Deans about the budget on multiple occasions. The review team does not reference the 2017 review much, which found that SJSU was making strong progress. The 2017 review team letter stated that the “SJSU administration” among other things, should be commended “for its positive momentum in regards to shared governance” and for its “[e]fforts toward promoting inclusiveness in the strategic plan.” The 2022 comments that we have not “made significant progress” seems to contradict the 2017 findings and commendations without much evidence to support this claim.

**Student Success Efforts Closing the Equity Gap:** SJSU’s GI 2025 Task Force, made up of leadership from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs monitors campus metrics assessing first-year and transfer undergraduate student success. The investments in Institutional

Research's analytics infrastructure will pay dividends in helping us be more data-informed while investing in tools to enhance our data literacy. An October 2021 CSU report shows the campus exhibited "good progress" on first-time 4-year graduation rate, first-time 6-year graduation rate, transfer 2-year graduation rate, and transfer 4-year graduation rate. For transfer student 4-year graduation rate, SJSU has already met its 2025 goal. There are two areas where SJSU has not yet met the goals - closing the URM Equity Gap and the Pell Eligibility Equity Gap; SJSU has made some progress toward the latter in the last two years. As the review team notes, the investments in Academic Advising is a positive step to support the "whole student" and shows our intentional response to previous WSCUC reports. Since the visit, this position has been elevated and now reports directly to the Provost as part of his leadership team.

Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML): The review team acknowledges the complexity of the model and recommends we "[c]onduct a critical review of the Moss Landing Consortium. The team also suggests that "SJSU students pay fees to SJSU but do not receive the same level of service or programs at MLML." SJSU faculty at MLML teach students who are enrolled at other campuses in the CSU system (that is nearly 50% of the students). Contrary to the report (p. 52), all tenure-track/tenured faculty at MLML teaching in the master's program are SJSU faculty. No other consortium campus funds faculty working at MLML; they are all SJSU employees. We receive no funding from those other campuses for non-SJSU students taught at MLML. If SJSU received the funding for these students it could hire a "Student Services Professional," as the WSCUC review suggests, investing more in direct student support on its premises. At the same time, students have their own library at MLML and online access to the second largest collection in the CSU at SJSU. Students also receive virtual support for financial aid, the bursar, as well as other core services. But, because of the model, SJSU cannot report the degrees for students enrolled at MLML from other campuses, although SJSU faculty do nearly all the teaching (students occasionally take a course at another CSU). SJSU also does not receive state support dollars for students enrolled at other campuses. Instead, other campuses, who grant the degrees from their home institutions (and not MLML), receive that state support. SJSU and CSU Stanislaus are the only campuses to have official approval from WSCUC to offer degrees at MLML.

Issues of Leadership Transition: We face similar challenges to other institutions that have leadership transitions but it has not diminished the SJSU's leadership team's effectiveness. As the interim president, while the search for the next President is ongoing, I have kept the course of the campus on track by following our Strategic Plan and maintaining focus on our priorities to support student success, academic excellence, regional engagement, and diversity, equity, and inclusion while fostering a positive campus climate. The Cabinet is seasoned and experienced, despite the comments in the report. Indeed, the leadership team has not only led the campus but regional and national conversations on DEI, student affairs strategies, business enterprises, and online education as well as student success, for example. Our investments in the research enterprise allows us to attract and retain world-class faculty; SJSU has hired more tenure-track faculty over the last seven years than any other campus in the CSU.

We appreciate the Review Team recognizing all the amazing accomplishments of the faculty, staff, and students of this campus. To continue our good work and ensure time to properly evaluate our progress, we look forward to the Commission's final decision on our accreditation.

Sincerely,



Steve Perez  
Interim President