

## Academic Excellence and Leadership (AEL)

**Goal: Be a premier university where faculty and staff are regional, national, and global leaders in their fields.**

- Support and celebrate research, scholarship and creative activities.
- Foster and promote areas of distinction and innovation.

Desired outcomes:

1. SJSU has a national and global reputation for academic excellence characterized by scholarly and professional contributions from faculty who are genuine teacher-scholars.
2. SJSU teacher-scholars engage more students at all levels in faculty-mentored scholarly activity.
3. SJSU is a leader in engagement of people from underrepresented populations in scholarly activity as thought leaders.
4. SJSU has cross-disciplinary institutes capitalizing on our signature strengths.
5. SJSU students, faculty, and staff will be distinguished by the ethic of exemplary service to the university and the community.

*The following narrative describes the processes and results of our discussions to create our recommended goal, desired outcomes, strategies, and metrics.*

**We started with the questions:** The term “academic excellence” is fairly self-evident, and the campus had been planning moves toward more research orientation these past years anyway. Carnegie classification had been on people’s minds, especially via an initiative through the Provost’s office. Still, at the outset we weren’t sure what the optimal extent of academic excellence would be. “Academic leadership” was less clear, so our group had to discuss and debate that.

Thus:

- How should our academic excellence manifest itself?
- What is “academic leadership” and how can we achieve it?

**In our meetings we wrestled with** what it means for a campus to show academic leadership, and who is involved in achieving that. Faculty? Staff? Administrators? Whom should we focus on? We also debated the true meaning of “teacher-scholar” and what the ideal balance is between a stronger research orientation and our traditional teaching strength. Finally, we wondered how best to involved underrepresented students in more research.

**We initially came up with** nine outcomes for our goal set. But then combined and eliminated some to arrive at five:

1. SJSU has a national and global reputation for academic excellence and scholarly and professional contributions
2. SJSU is a leader in engagement of people from underrepresented populations in RSCA
3. SJSU engages (more) students at all levels in RSCA

4. SJSU has cross-disciplinary institutes capitalizing on our signature strengths
5. SJSU students, faculty, and staff will be distinguished by an ethic of exemplary service to the university and the community

#### **After reading the feedback from the campus**

- In May, our first desired outcome was that “SJSU faculty engage (more) students at all levels in RSCA.” We had actually moved this one, after the survey responses came in from the campus, to accentuate the importance of RSCA to the education of students ... we sensed from the responses that people were concerned that the outcome as previously drafted was mostly about RSCA for RSCA’s sake. It is not supposed to be that: primarily, it is meant to be for the better education of our students. And in that way there’s a good bit of overlap with the high-impact practices as outlined in the previous goal set.
- In further accommodating survey responses and our task force’s ongoing discussions, we had decided to add a mention of “teacher-scholars” to the second desired outcome. We did this in order to avoid giving short shrift to one of our university’s great strengths, which should not go away – the education of students, and the great teaching that demands. In this outcome also, we relegated the mention of Carnegie classification to subordinate status, rather than in the superordinate outcome statement.
- A few additional revisions: in outcome 3, we’d originally had as a bullet to increase the diversity of faculty – then we added “staff” to that. In outcome 4, we’d originally specified considering a “center for the scholarship of teaching and learning,” but after the survey feedback indicated some confusion as to what that meant, and further discussion, we decided that a more general reference was preferable for now: “Identify areas in which institutes can be sustainable.”

#### **For the May 7, 2018 draft**

We decided to present a list of five desired outcomes, as revised:

1. SJSU faculty engage (more) students at all levels in research, scholarship, and creative activity
2. SJSU has a national and global reputation for academic excellence and scholarly and professional contributions from a faculty who are genuine teacher-scholars
3. SJSU is a leader in engagement of people from underrepresented populations in RSCA
4. SJSU has cross-disciplinary institutes capitalizing on our signature strengths
5. SJSU students, faculty, and staff will be distinguished by the ethic of exemplary service to the university and the community

#### **During the summer and fall of 2018**

- The AEL task force worked on various challenges and concerns voiced by outside parties (“fresh eyes”), including Interim Provost Joan Ficke. The result has been a re-arrangement of our outcomes and a somewhat reduced emphasis on “RSCA” per se, in favor of emphasis on the teacher-scholar model and faculty mentoring of students in scholarship.
- In addition to collaboration with Interim Provost Joan Ficke, Michael Kaufman (Dean of the College of Science) provided input to the AEL fall task force in the fall.

### **Final recommended AEL desired outcomes (as listed above in the box)**

1. SJSU has a national and global reputation for academic excellence characterized by scholarly and professional contributions from faculty who are genuine teacher-scholars.
2. SJSU teacher-scholars engage more students at all levels in faculty-mentored scholarly activity.
3. SJSU is a leader in engagement of people from underrepresented populations in scholarly activity as thought leaders.
4. SJSU has cross-disciplinary institutes capitalizing on our signature strengths.
5. SJSU students, faculty, and staff will be distinguished by the ethic of exemplary service to the university and the community.

### **Final recommended AEL strategies**

1. [Outcome: *SJSU has a national and global reputation for academic excellence characterized by scholarly and professional contributions from faculty who are genuine teacher-scholars.*]
  - a. Convey the message that SJSU is an institution where both outstanding teaching and world-class scholarship are valued and accessible to students.
  - b. Develop doctoral programs in select areas of excellence.
  - c. Attract and retain T/TT faculty who are leaders in their fields.
  - d. Provide supports for career-long engagement in RSCA by T/TT faculty.
  - e. Improve physical facilities to be commensurate with a premier university.
  - f. Create capacity and infrastructure to measure RSCA output and impact.
  - g. Celebrate and publicize RSCA output.
  - h. Increase outward-facing dissemination of our professional service activities
  - i. Celebrate our exceptional teaching.
2. [Outcome: *SJSU teacher-scholars engage more students at all levels in faculty-mentored scholarly activity.*]
  - a. Reinforce the value of student engagement in RSCA both for student success and for the benefit of the RSCA.
  - b. Provide incentives to faculty for engaging students in RSCA:
    - i. Internal grants and matching funds for supported students.
    - ii. Teaching credit for RSCA mentoring.
    - iii. Compile and disseminate best practices for student engagement in RSCA.
  - c. Develop ways to promote RSCA among students, measure demand, and connect students and faculty.
3. [Outcome: *SJSU is a leader in engagement of people from underrepresented populations in scholarly activity as thought leaders.*]
  - a. Increase diversity of faculty and staff.
  - b. Capitalize on and expand our role as a pipeline of undergraduates from diverse backgrounds into RSCA careers.
  - c. Enhance campus supports for underrepresented populations (reference campus climate reports).
  - d. Support and expand focused programs providing pathways to student RSCA (McNair, RISE, MARC, etc.).
4. [Outcome: *SJSU has cross-disciplinary institutes capitalizing on our signature strengths.*]
  - a. Identify areas in which institutes can be sustainable: funding, staff, faculty engagement, and space.

- b. Encourage and foster ties with leading industry partners that are active in research/applied research.
- 5. [Outcome: *SJSU students, faculty, and staff will be distinguished by the ethic of exemplary service to the university and the community.*]
  - a. SJSU seeks Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.
  - b. Support and strengthen our capacity for high impact service learning programs (such as CommUniverCity, Center for Community Learning and Leadership, etc.)
  - c. Enhance opportunities, recognition, and rewards for service.

#### **Final recommended AEL metrics**

- 1. [Outcome: *SJSU has a national and global reputation for academic excellence characterized by scholarly and professional contributions from faculty who are genuine teacher-scholars.*]
  - a. National educational institution rankings.
  - b. Faculty recognition in national academies.
  - c. Faculty national and international disciplinary awards.
- 2. [Outcome: *SJSU teacher-scholars engage more students at all levels in faculty-mentored scholarly activity.*]
  - a. NSSE data.
  - b. Enrollment in individual studies courses.
  - c. Student co-authorship on publications and other modes of disseminating scholarly and creative activity.
- 3. [Outcome: *SJSU is a leader in engagement of people from underrepresented populations in scholarly activity as thought leaders.*]
  - a. Self-reported identity designations.
- 4. [Outcome: *SJSU has cross-disciplinary institutes capitalizing on our signature strengths.*]
  - a. Identify and designate cross-disciplinary institutes based on subject diversity.
  - b. Monitor number of faculty, students, and non-SJSU affiliates engaged in designated institutes.
  - c. Monitor extramural funding for designated institutes.
- 5. [Outcome: *SJSU students, faculty, and staff will be distinguished by the ethic of exemplary service to the university and the community.*]
  - a. SJSU achieves Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.