Middle States Update
Campus Changes Since Submission of the 2020 Cal U Self-Study Report

Geraldine M. Jones, President
Leonard A. Colelli, Accreditation Liaison Officer

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Introduction

California University of Pennsylvania was scheduled to host an On-Site Evaluation Visit in Spring 2020 which the Middle States Commission delayed due to lockdown of the university as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 15, the United States Department of Education extended flexibilities offered to accrediting agencies to conduct virtual site visits through December 31, 2020. Cal U elected the option of a virtual visit, Team Chair President Kathryn Foster agreed, the virtual visit has been scheduled for Tuesday September 22nd to Friday September 25th.

This Middle States Update Report is provided to summarize changes at the institution since the submission original Self-Study Report in February of 2020. This report includes information about our spring semester campus lockdown with remote operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the results of a survey of "Student Perception of Online Academic Instruction and Student Affairs Programming" at the end of the spring semester, actions taken to address student concerns, information about our fall semester re-opening, administrative personnel changes, the academic reorganization of our undergraduate colleges, an implementation update of self-study "opportunities for improvement and innovations", an assessment update, a brief discussion about our State System redesign and "Institutional Sustainable Plan", a State System Board of Governors plan to merge Cal U and Clarion University ("CalClarion Merger"), and a policy update with a new institution-wide "Student Complaint Policy and three new COVID-19 related policies.

University Closure due to COVID-19 (Spring Semester 2020)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, California University of Pennsylvania moved to lockdown status with remote operations beginning March 16, 2020. All classes were delivered online or via distance learning. Faculty previously teaching 100% online courses continued "business as usual". Faculty teaching face-to-face courses were provided a two-week period (after spring break) to convert their classes to online delivery beginning on Monday, March 30th. With the exception of essential employees required to maintain campus safety and vital operations, employees shifted to working remotely as well.

Faculty & Student Survey Summary

At the end of the spring semester, a "Student Perception of Online Academic Instruction and Student Affairs Programming" was administered to all Cal U students during spring semester university lockdown. A brief summary of the survey (PDF 1) is provided below.

Students said that they:
- Did not learn as much as face to face.
- Do not prefer online to face to face.
- Have adequate technology and reliable internet.
- Knew about Library services.

- Did not know about Peer Mentoring, Academic Success workshops, VLC, Supplemental Instruction, Smarthinking online tutoring.

Sample student comments:
- I feel like all classes should have a required meeting time just as you would have in person.
- Workload increased for many.
- Communication was an issue for many (lack of from professors).
- Many yearned for lectures—PowerPoints not enough.
- Many don't want online again! Will not come back if 100% online.
- Same day, same time via zoom was helpful and appreciated.

Faculty said:
- Most did not attend a Spring 2020 TLC online teaching workshop.
- Most did attend one TLC workshop for online teaching in the past.
- Because of COVID-19, most would consider taking training.
- Of those that want training, most desire to focus on Instructional Design.

Sample faculty comments:
- More time to prepare for online needed—many comments!
- Many asked for more training

Actions Taken to Address Student Concerns

Voluntary "Summer-Fall 2020 Faculty Training Sessions" were designed and scheduled through our Teaching and Learning Center (PDF 2). Faculty were also asked to be adaptable, responsible, provide more frequent interaction and feedback and to take care of themselves during the summer terms and fall semester.

Fall Reopening

Our initial plan for the fall 2020 semester was to start a week earlier with a return to face to face instruction and conclude the semester prior to the Thanksgiving holiday with an array of appropriate COVID-19 prevention precautions including physical distancing in classrooms, signage across campus promoting physical distancing in other areas (e.g., hallways, window front service areas, etc.), required face masks for all (students, faculty, staff), physical distancing procedures across the university (e.g., reduced classroom seating, large classes moved to larger rooms, "Owl" video conferencing for synchronous instruction with weekly student rotations (in-class and remote), hand sanitizer stations throughout all buildings, cancellation of fall semester athletic sports, closure of congregation spaces (e.g., dining facility, movie theatre, resident hall common areas, etc.).

Throughout the summer, Pennsylvania's COVID infection rate worsened from Level 2 to Level 4 of the CDC and PA Department of Health guidelines for operation. At levels 1-3, our county (Washington) remained in the "green" or "yellow' phase of the governor's "Phased Reopening and Recovery Plan". When Washington County reached Level 4, our president and cabinet made a preemptive decision (for health and safety reasons) to suspend all in-person classes and campus activities for the fall 2020 semester except for life-and facility-sustaining operations.

Cal U published a fall semester "Guide to Operations" (PDF 3) on our website with information and resource links for academics, faculty training for remote teaching, grading policy, information about our "Respondus Lockdown Browser/Monitor" verification of student ID testing platform, library services, books and learning technology, athletics, campus dining services, campus housing, financial adjustments: tuition and fees, communications, events,

recreation center, health and safety, counseling center, health center, and other important information for Level 4 operation during the fall 2020 semester. Cal U also published "FAQ for Students" (PDF 4) on our website, listing and answering over 40 questions students might ask concerning the fall 2020 semester and an Academic Affairs Reopening Committee developed a "Reopening Guide for Faculty" (PDF 5).

Administrative Changes at Cal U

Three major administrative changes occurred during the summer of 2020.

- Director of Institutional Effectiveness Steve Atkins resigned on May 1st to rejoin his consulting group. Assistant to the Director Alice Jenkins was appointed director of institutional effectiveness. She, along with faculty assessment liaisons Holiday Adair, Justin Hackett, and Sarah Downey (General Education), comprise the leadership team for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness with Alice now leading this effort.

  Note: Steve Atkins was the primary architect of our revised annual and General Education assessment processes and has agreed to participate in our virtual visit.

- Provost Barnhart retired in early July and Associate VP for Academic Affairs Daniel Engstrom was appointed as interim provost. His position in the Academic Success Center was also backfilled.

- Dean of the College of Education and Human Services Kevin Koury retired in April. We reorganized our academic affairs undergraduate college structure from three to two colleges as a component of our revised 2-Year Sustainability Plan.

Academic Reorganization

During this exceptionally challenging time, the retirement of the Dean of COEHS provided an opportunity to reassign those duties through consolidation and reorganization aligned with the PASSHE Chancellor's sustainability initiatives. Chancellor Greenstein's February 12, 2020 memo directed university presidents "not fill vacant staff and faculty positions (including executive level positions) unless they meet essential needs as determined by the president".

This reorganization consolidated three undergraduate colleges into two: the "College of Education and Liberal Arts" and the "Eberly College of Science and Technology", reducing the number of departments from 22 to 11 and providing each college dean with an assistant dean position (responsible for new program development, assessment, and accreditation), to supplement the administrative assistant in the dean's office and a clerk-typist for every academic department. Improved efficiencies were also achieved with a reduction of CBA mandated faculty workload equivalency releases from 10.75 to 6.75 FTE and a reduction of staff positions from 19.75 to 14.00 FTE for an estimated annual cost savings in excess of $800,000 per year (PDF 6).

This realignment was designed to streamline academic operations, provide greater consistency for student experiences, expand teaching opportunities within departments for permanent faculty, align specific program accreditations within departments, and enhance the culture of assessment at Cal U.

The new College of Education and Liberal Arts consists of the departments of Education; Health and Human Service Professions; Culture, Media and Performance; Humanities; and Social Sciences. The federally funded TRIO program is also housed in this College.

The Eberly College of Science and Technology houses the departments of Biology, Geology and Environmental Sciences; Business, Economics and Enterprise Sciences; Computer

Science, Information Systems and Engineering Technology; Exercise Science and Sport Studies; Mathematics and Physical Sciences; and Nursing and Health Sciences. The School of Graduate Studies and Research remains unchanged.

This academic reorganization will not affect student progress toward graduation. Some programs will be housed within a different College or a new academic department, but course content, program accreditation and graduation requirements will not be affected. Students will benefit because more courses will be taught by permanent faculty instead of temporary instructors, but some students will have new academic advisors.

Faculty will be assigned to new departments; a few departments will be housed in a different College. The University will follow APSCUF guidelines for election of department chairs and some faculty may be assigned new student advisees per "REORG Departments" (PDF 7).

Implementation Update of Self-Study Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

- Standards I & III: As of the fall 2020 semester, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) merged with the Office of Institutional Research (IR) into one complementary Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness office (per the "Proposed IRPE Org Chart" - PDF 8) to leverage the strengths of both units for providing better data and improved institutional effectiveness throughout the University.

- Standard II: Based on the results of our spring 2019 HEDS Diversity and Equity Survey, on June 30th our Cabinet approved a "Campus Wide Diversity Initiative" (PDF 9) proposal to create a standing campus-wide diversity committee to administer and review HEDS survey results (every two years) and develop campus-wide programming and services to improve diversity and campus climate.

- Standard III: On June 6th, we initiated a dialogue with PASSHE (Rosa Lara) to negotiate cost sharing system-wide licenses for digital experience management (Qualtrics) and curriculum inventory management (CIM) systems to better support faculty research, assessment processes, and curricular tracking/approval processes. We were informed that negotiations were in progress for a shared Qualtrics license and they would consider also working on a CIM license.

- Standard IVa: During the 2020 spring semester, we initiated phase one of merging individual academic support services (Writing Center, STEM Assistant Lab, and Tutoring Center) into a "Vulcan Learning Commons" (PDF 10) currently located in Noss Hall. The VLC comprises two centers, the Foundry Writing Center and the Learning Assistance Center. Phase two (expected to be fully operational by spring 2022) will repurpose and renovate space at a central location on campus to support the multitude of academic and student-support areas and coordinate their services. Driven by student needs, the space will be readily accessible, functional and inviting, as an aesthetically inspirational learning environment to foster student success. An academic/student success consultant will be engaged to evaluate current services and locations to assist with the planning and renovation processes.

- Standard IVb: A search for an additional full-time psychologist/counselor for the Cal U Counseling Center was conducted during the 2019-2020 academic year to address the growing mental health challenges students face and ensure adequate staffing in the Counseling Center. The search failed and a second search is currently in progress.

- Standard V: Progress occurred on two opportunities for improvement and innovation as a result of the new associate dean positions in the merged undergraduate colleges. This personnel enhancement will better ensure that the General Education outcomes are

more effectively communicated throughout the university and are widely used for institutional planning. The associate deans will also be responsibility for working with the recently integrated Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness office to support and reinforce implementation and documentation of improvement activities identified in assessment action plans.

- Standard VI: Three opportunities for improvement and innovation either have or will soon be implemented at Cal U.

  o The PASSHE Business Intelligence Functional Cost Tool (FCT) is currently used as one of many program performance indicators in our revised periodic program review (of academic majors) process to provide measures of program "return-on-investment" for viability and program prioritization. As of fall 2020, this tool will also be used as a component of our PASSHE required "Institutional Sustainability Plan" (page 10) to determine academic and nonacademic program viability essential to "operating under sound and efficient fiscal and governance practices", one of the three key initiatives in our 2015-21 Strategic Plan.

  o As indicated in the June 19, 2020 "Institutional Sustainability Plan" (pages 6-7), the university-wide "Tuition Pricing Task Force" began developing new pricing models for students to assist with recruiting efforts for undergraduate face-to-face and Cal U Global Online programs. Net pricing opportunities for out-of-state students and new pricing strategies for Dual-Enrollment and Educational Alliance programs have been approved and are being implemented in the Cal U marketing strategy. The university also plans to implement new pricing structures for high-demand programs. Combined initiatives are expected to generate $150,000 as well as increased retention.

  o Discussions on improving transparency of resources, planning and communication of topics of significance to Cal U's faculty and staff is a shared opportunity for improvement and innovation with the Standard VII work group (see narrative below).

- Standard VII: Per results from the spring 2019 AAUP Governance Survey, during the fall of 2019 we began a discussion about improving communication and trust across the university by mitigating existing governance silos in the "Cal U Governance Structure" (PDF 11) with the possibility of creating a strategic-level integrative governance committee, such as a University Senate; capable of deliberations and recommendations regarding important, university-wide issues. An integrative committee within the governance model could also strengthen the link between university-wide assessment and the existing Planning and Budgeting Committee as expected by Middle States Requirement of Affiliation #10.

  At the request of President Jones, Interim Provost Engstrom and AVP Colelli are currently developing an invitation letter for leaders of Student Government, Staff Leadership Council, APSCUF (faculty union), Faculty Senate, and administration to meet and consider the creation of an integrated governance body such as a "University Senate". If there is agreement, their charge will to begin work on a constitution for this new integrative governance body. Our goal is to have this taskforce in place and meeting by the time of the virtual Middle States evaluation team visit.

Assessment Update

As of August 17th, the 2019-20 annual assessment participation rate for academic programs was 58% (down 17% from 2018-19) and was 69% for administrative service areas (down 4%

from 2018-19). We believe the major contributor to these losses was the spring mid-semester university lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the work required by many of our faculty (who have never taught online) to rapidly convert their face-to-face classes to online format. However, we applaud the relatively low loss of participation in our administrative service areas.

As of June 30th, the participation rate of the initial (2019-20) cycle of the revised PASSHE program review process was 87% for the 15 academic program majors scheduled for review. A "Program Review Assessment Survey" (PDF 12) was administered to participants (program coordinators, primary and secondary reviewers, and deans) in the program review process. Survey results led to many improvements in the program review templates. One performance area was eliminated and many criteria within remaining performance areas were also eliminated to streamline the program review reports.

Some of the survey responders also identified a problem with the PDF program review template narrative boxes. As the boxes filled with text, the size of the text became increasingly smaller and more difficult to read. Therefore, we changed the template from PDF to an MS Word Forms format, eliminating that problem for the 2020-21 program review cycle. We also added Requirement of Affiliation #10 "Strategic Action Plan Funding Request" applications (PDF 13) to the "Full" (non-accredited) and "Modified" (accredited) program review templates.

During the summer of 2020, The Institutional Effectiveness (IE) office proposed and implemented a "Consolidation of Administrative Assessment Committees" (PDF 14) merging the Student Affairs Assessment Committee (SAAC) with the Administrative and Educational Support Assessment Committee (AESAC) to more effectively engage staff across all administrative support units for continuous improvement of the quality of assessment planning within their departments. The Academic Program Assessment Committee's (APAC) role will continue focusing on academic programs, whereas AESAC will now address all non-academic programs and services, including those in Student Affairs. Merging the two committees into one complementary unit will leverage the strengths of both units for providing better data and improved institutional effectiveness throughout the University.

PASSHE System Redesign (and Institutional Sustainability Plans)

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education is redesigning itself in response to an array of challenges that confront public higher education nationally but are acutely concentrated in Pennsylvania. As such, Pennsylvania is drawing on lessons learned from more focused efforts in other states to fundamentally transform its education and business models—allowing it to sustainably drive economic development and social mobility into the 21st century. What began as a top-to-bottom System Review in 2016-17, soon transitioned into Phase 1 of System Redesign in 2017-18, Phase 2 in 2018-19, and is now rapidly moving forward according to the following timeline.
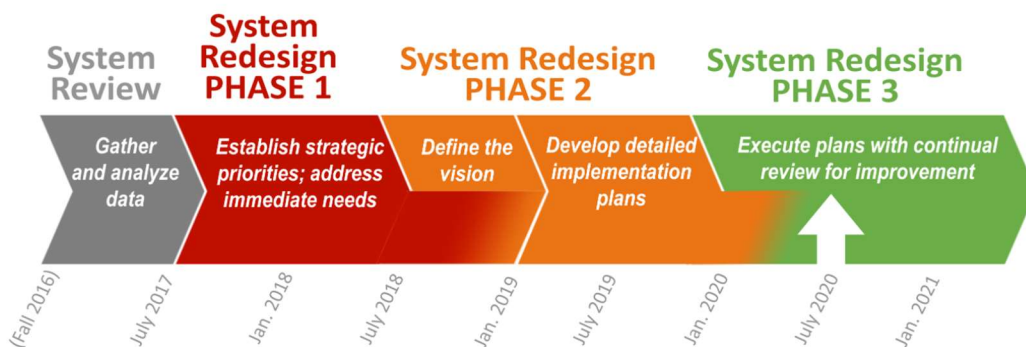
During Phase 2, all PASSHE universities were required to submit 5-year institutional sustainability plans as indicated in our self-study report. However, more recent economic shifts related to the COVID-19 pandemic, required a more aggressive 2-year "Cal U Sustainability Plan" (PDF 15) which was submitted on June 19, 2020. Activities regarding enrollment, revenue growth and expenditure savings were included in this plan because the urgency of achieving a sustainable operation is essential to protect the remaining university fund balance reserves.

An overview of ongoing, planned and in-process activities across core areas relating to university success include the following.

- Enrollment
  - Prepare for changes in student demographics over the next two years.
  - Launch new academic programs in areas where significant market demand exists without adding faculty FTE.
  - Deploy a new Strategic Enrollment Management Plan that will boost recruitment strategies, continue scholarship optimization efforts, and enhance engagement across campus.
  - Enhance retention efforts by piloting a "New Advising Approach" (PDF 16), consolidating Academic Success labs and services into one cohesive "Vulcan Learning Commons" for student learning, and expanding the advising and intervention tools within Starfish, an early-alert communication tool.

- Revenue Growth
  - Invest in new academic programs with promising revenue expectations,
  - Expand dual-enrollment opportunities.
  - Create Educational Alliance partnerships with reduced tuition rates.
  - Establish a partnership with the Allegheny Health Network for the creation of a community-based Social Work clinic located on the Cal U campus.
  - Pursue shared service hosting opportunities for various transactional-based processes.
  - Participate in a new "ReUp" national degree-completion undergraduate transfer network.
  - Increase resident hall room rates for the first time in eight years.

- Expenditure Savings
  - Right-size faculty and staff FTE to student FTE and improve ratios toward 2010-11 targets.
  - Utilize System methodology adopted by the Executive Leadership Group (ELG) to right-size faculty FTE and eliminate the non-viable portfolio of academic programs.
  - Implement a new Academic Program Review process.
  - Implement a new remote virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to enhance remote delivery of courses to students while saving on annual computer lab refresh expenditures.
  - Launch a pilot program where Cal U faculty in low demand programs can deliver online courses to students at other State System universities.
  - Allow faculty to shift course load requirements over an academic year.
  - Streamline academic operations by consolidating undergraduate colleges and departments. Activities include re-envisioning the organization of the undergraduate colleges from three to two and restructuring 21 academic departments into 11.
  - Pursue shared service opportunities with other State System universities in performing various transactional-based processes.
  - Shrink the campus footprint to achieve significant operational savings and increase efficiency levels.

- o Refinance bonds for E&G Auxiliary operations.
- o Continue implementation of a university-wide managed print service and expand inhouse printing capability of University Print Services department.
- o Explore outsourcing opportunities.
- o Evaluate eliminating cable TV contracts in the residence halls.
- o Negotiate a new Vulcan Flyer bus contract.

Considerable efforts are already underway to accomplish additional activities. Since 2012, Cal U has been proactive in identifying and implementing strategies to strengthen its financial sustainability. During that time, operational expenditures were reduced by nearly $10 million, non-instructional staff were reduced by 23%, three university operations were outsourced, and many operational support systems were streamlined. While those efforts have been locally managed and self-guided, the new financial sustainability framework from the PASSHE "Comprehensive Planning Process" will provide broader System-wide support, as well as more accountability as further right-sizing initiatives and revenue-generating opportunities are implemented over the next few years.

CalClarion Merger

The PASSHE Board of Governors recently approved a plan to integrate California University and Clarion University in accordance with recently passed PA Act 50 legislation. Cal U and Clarion have a significant digital and online footprint at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. There is interest: 1) for pursuing the untapped market of nontraditional degree seekers in PA outlying regions; 2) sharing faculty who can teach online undergraduate and graduate levels across universities; 3) sharing support IT staff, and appropriate equipment; 4) developing seamless, organized, responsive, competitive advising, degree completion, transcript and portfolio evaluation processes; 5) creating a "CalClarion Consortium" to assess and develop undergraduate programming serving all fourteen universities, and 6) providing quality education in online programming to fill curricular gaps at many PASSHE universities.

PASSHE believes there is great potential that the development and refinement of a CalClarion Consortium can eventually become a PASSHE Portal for year-round online programming. A business plan will be developed to address assessment, program offerings, future development, and a marketing/support plan. It is expected that this analysis will provide an in-depth pathway for PASSHE to leverage synergies through the organization integration process to reduce costs, enhance revenue and serve the needs of the citizens and workforce of the Commonwealth.

Policy Update:

A new Campus-Wide "Student Complaint Policy" (PDF 17) was developed and approved by all governance bodies (University Curriculum Committee, APSCUF Executive Committee, Student Senate, and Staff Leadership Council). Final approval from the Cabinet occurred on June 30, 2020. Three COVID-19 policies were also approved by Cabinet (PDF 18, 19, and 20).