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The California State University Commission on the Extended University
Summary of Recurrent Themes: 2014/2015 Survey of Innovation in the CSU Extended University

This survey of innovation covered all 23 California State University (CSU) campuses. The survey was based on two questions: 1. The most significant innovations in the campus extended learning unit in the last two years. 2. The challenges and opportunities ahead for CSU extended learning from the perspective of each campus. This document is a summary of some of the recurrent themes that emerged from the survey.

A significant number of campuses talked about innovations that were linked to external partnerships. These partnerships were often rather distinctive leading not only to innovations but also to additions to the resources and facilities in the CSU. Examples of these partnerships include the Maritime Academy's work with regional law enforcement, fire departments in the region, the Coast Guard, and Chevron to create a simulation facility (including a full size ship) with advanced technologies that simulate various emergencies providing the context for emergency response and safety training. These facilities are now leading to expanded collaboration with the broader petroleum industry. These facilities also provide a much enriched educational experience for the matriculated students at the Maritime Academy. There are similar accounts of collaborations that have expanded specialized facilities for the health sciences and other professional preparation programs.

External collaborations have also led to innovations in programs. At Chico, collaboration with the Ag Idea Consortium has led to a very distinctive agricultural education program that shares courses with other institutions in the consortium. Channel Islands has worked in partnership with Santa Barbara City College to create a BS-MBA program. CSULA is working with thirteen regional community colleges to create an innovative and carefully crafted accelerated program that leads from the Associate's Degree in nursing to the BSN. A number of campuses reported expanded work with community colleges. Long Beach has had a long and productive partnership with the ports which has led to a number of innovative credit and noncredit programs.

A number of these partnerships also included successfully seeking grants to support innovative initiatives. The partnerships were often seen as adding to the competitive advantage in the competition for grant funding. Overall grants (with or without external partners) were more a part of reports of innovation this time then when the Commission last did such a survey of innovations.

Many campuses also reported the creation of new degree programs. Some of these were among the first a given campus had developed for online or hybrid delivery. Some were in emerging fields such as those at San Jose in software engineering and battery technology and the cybersecurity master's degree at San Marcos.

Educational technologies also played a significant role in innovations over the last couple of years on many campuses as one might expect. There are innovations and challenges in ensuring excellence and distinction in program design and instructional strategies as well as in technology and student support. The survey shows that of the campuses beginning to develop online and hybrid programs there are some more inclined to work with external resources. In part, the appeal is that these professional external providers are seen as a pathway to ensuring that they will always be working with professionals focused on remaining current in the field and, in turn, keeping that campus's online and hybrid programs current from the perspective of the use of educational technologies. Some who see this value of remaining current also, in some cases, see the issues that can arise when an external provider, while current, is committed to the use of a particular LMS and/or selected educational technologies. For other campuses, the path forward is to create an internal campus-specific capacity. Those developing campus capacities seem to be more focused on the issues of instructional design expertise and having that expertise available to work with faculty to develop online instructional strategies and to make choices of technology strategies that are focused on achieving particular educational outcomes. These choices and the programs and capabilities that emerge should give the CSU a wide range of models that may afford different advantages for different campuses and those that they serve.

International programs, partnerships, and campus strategies are also a recurrent them among the innovations reported for the past two years. Many campuses talked about expanding international recruitment with responsibility both for recruiting for self-support programs and for state-funded degree programs often with the campus extended

university unit. In some cases active international recruitment was relatively new for the campus in question so strategy and capacity development were at issue. A couple of campuses also reported renovating or adding space to create a hub for international students – and an international house/hall model.

A number of campuses also reported innovations in administration. In some cases a change or role on the campus and/or organizational structure, but in most cases it was the implementation of new technologies such as moving self-support operations into PeopleSoft, acquiring and developing strategies for using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and the like, and developing ways to gather and use data to analyze program/marketing performance and/or to inform managerial decisions.

For the future: Among the themes that recurred when campus extended university leaders were asked what the challenges and opportunities were for the future:

Challenges – Quarter campuses converting to semesters over the next three years noted that there were significant challenges in some cases impacting the ability to start new credit programs. A number of campuses from the recent audits were left feeling that there was very limited flexibility with the use of self-support funds which some felt could impact the incentives for some departments/colleges to work with the extended university unit to develop new programs, and there were many mentions of campus concerns about the definition of "supplanting" and that having a potentially chilling impact on starting new programs in self-support and/or fully using the capacities of self-support to serve the region. Limited resources were noted by some campuses as the challenges of increased competition. Online education and international opportunities were noted as both challenges and opportunities.

Opportunities – Many noted that if the CSU extended university units could develop a more robust and sustainable approach to innovative collaboration across institutional lines that the CSU extended university could more easily position the CSU for leadership in online teaching and learning, and international programs and partnerships. This kind of collaboration was also seen as an opportunity to work on new administrative technologies across institutional lines (rather than re-inventing on each campus) with the development and dissemination of the new application system (AAWS) being an example of that approach.

Changing and expanding the CSU's role in economic development (and workforce preparation) is another very important opportunity for the next few years. Again this might require a regional collaborative strategy and repositioning the CSU as an essential participant in broad regional economic and community development (one emerging model for this is the **CSU5** partnership among the five CSUs that service Greater LA).

Looking ahead for higher education overall, refined and sophisticated simulations are likely to play an increasingly important role in advanced professional education in many fields. Virtual labs will also grow in importance. CSU CE/EE units can take a lead role in developing such educational tools – collaboration, seeking major grant funding, developing partnerships with key industries, and the like are strategies that can allow CSU CE/EE to create forefront simulation and virtual lab models

Conversations in higher education are putting more emphasis on the importance of creating a link between an effective liberal education and professional preparation so that graduates have both the advanced conceptual skills and depth and breadth of understanding needed for success in the contemporary global economy/community along with the necessary knowledge and professional skills needed in the particular discipline/field in question. CSU CE/EE offers an increasing number of programs at the graduate level for midcareer professionals. Going forward, as new programs are developed, CSU CE/EE is well positioned to create influential models of the effective integration of advanced professional education and the cultivation of advanced conceptual skills.

A number of campuses also noted that the CSU extended university has grown and matured over the past ten years and is now better positioned to support the evolution of the CSU overall and be a hub for innovation and agility in the CSU as state dollars continue to decline but the need for the educational and research strengths of CSU in California continues to expand, particularly in arenas such as economic and community development, support for the development of regional industry clusters, strengthening California's position in the global marketplace with increased international partnerships, and a global focus in the preparation of the university-prepared workforce, playing a growing role in applied research in collaboration with regional public and private sector employers, and more.