

**CSU 2040:
Frameworks for the Future
of the California State University**

In this discussion paper, intended as a complement to *CSU Forward*, the *Student Success Framework*, and the *Strategic Enrollment Management Framework*, the ASCSU explores opportunities and possibilities for the future of the CSU. The paper begins with an overview of the purpose and value of the university and continues with an assessment of the main pressures on higher education in the next 10-15 years. This is followed by reflections on the meanings of student success, particularly with reference to the university beyond the undergraduate student and to lifelong learning. The document then proposes active learning (including varying incarnations as applied learning, experiential learning, problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning, etc.) as the lodestar for what makes the CSU special and successful. Finally, some metrics are offered to assess how the CSU is achieving its goals.

The paper is titled *Frameworks* because it does not support a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather advocates for a multifaceted view of the university. It is characterized as a discussion paper since it is intended as the starting point rather than the end point for a conversation about the future of higher education in the CSU. It does not set out *one* path forward, but rather explores *various* possibilities depending a) on social, political, and economic developments and b) the varying practices and needs in different academic disciplines, at different levels of higher education, etc. The ASCSU is confident and optimistic that this vision and version of the CSU will help our students and therefore the state of California succeed.

The Framework of the University

The university has never been a static institution, but always an evolving one, continuously reshaped by changes in society and the interests of its stakeholders. For instance, the university was once the preserve of a tiny (monastic and/or wealthy) elite but is now accessible to much larger populations. The stakeholders of the university (whether as attendees or as interested parties) include students and their families, faculty and staff, government funders, private donors, accrediting agencies, employers, and the public, and their interests range from access to education, academic freedom, accountability for funding, and production of a skilled workforce, to contributions to culture and knowledge (Altbach 2016). Despite sometimes distinct and sometimes intersecting interests, and despite varying stakeholders, the university maintains its central role as society's most enduring institution of higher learning.

Thus, the university exists in a field of tensions as far as whom it serves and to what ends:

- between the individual and society;
- between return on investment and public benefit;
- between worker and citizen;

- 42 • between cost and investment;
- 43 • between major and general education; and
- 44 • between short-term job placement and long-term career preparation.

45 These tensions must always be articulated and are ultimately impossible to fully reconcile. For
 46 that reason, in addition to constantly evolving, the university can never be just *one* thing, but
 47 must simultaneously embrace a variety of purposes and outcomes. In California, the three
 48 segments of public higher education (Community Colleges of California, California State
 49 University, and University of California) address these tensions in different ways, and the
 50 California State University (CSU) offers a unique version of higher education to serve the people
 51 of California. For instance, the CSU is unique in that its teachers are also scholars, so they are
 52 steeped in the latest academic developments while also knowing how to reach the kinds of
 53 students it enrolls.

54

55 The Individual

56 One purpose of the university is to offer academic, professional, and personal benefits for the
 57 student—though it needs to be stressed that individuals never simply purchase these benefits,
 58 but earn them through their work. The university provides the structure and resources, but
 59 individuals have to invest their own time to activate those resources. In simpler words, the
 60 university *teaches*, but only the individual can *learn*.

61 Students acquire knowledge, mostly through their major, that can be knowledge for its
 62 own sake or knowledge that can be instrumentalized for a job and career. An important purpose
 63 of the university is to prepare students for their first job as well as their long-term career, for
 64 instance through certification in certain professions. A university education may be expensive
 65 (though comparatively less so in the CSU), but it also leads to significant advantages in lifetime
 66 earnings (SSA study).

67 Students learn soft skills, mostly in general education, that have immense value for their
 68 profession and career and can also be useful in their personal lives. For this reason, general
 69 education is another important purpose of the university. The exclusive fixation on preparing
 70 students for jobs is too narrow since the job landscape is changing so quickly—this one focus
 71 does not fit all students and careers. Some estimates suggest that by 2040, more than 70% of
 72 jobs in the U.S. labor force will require a college degree or other credentials or postsecondary
 73 training (Lumina, 2025), and workers can expect that 40% of their existing skill sets will be
 74 transformed or become outdated by 2030 (World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report, 2025
 75 Insight Report, January 2025). Thus, an important purpose of the university is to look *beyond* the
 76 first job placement to career choices and changes. The CSU offers a strong general education
 77 program, particularly in the upper division, that connects with the students' majors, but also
 78 exposes them to ideas and concepts that they might only later connect to their lives and careers.

79 Finally, students are encouraged to hone mindsets, attitudes, and qualities such as
 80 integrity, dependability, responsibility, and tolerance. These help them become better citizens
 81 because they know more about how society works, but also turn them into lifelong learners who
 82 think of knowledge and skills as more than instrumental and develop a lifelong curiosity about

83 themselves, their community, and the world. This is the opposite of indoctrination: it is the
84 opening of the mind to new ideas and possibilities.

85

86 Society

87 On the level of society, the purpose of the university is to deliver parallel benefits. More
88 educated workers improve the economy, so the university should not be thought of as a cost or
89 expense—to the individual or to society—but as an investment. This was recognized in the late
90 twentieth century as the US economy developed into a “knowledge economy” (Powell &
91 Snellman, 2004) and enrollment in universities across the US exceeded 20 million students
92 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

93 In the first decades of the twenty-first century, critics have claimed that universities are
94 too expensive and therefore leave students in debt, indoctrinate students to certain worldviews,
95 and fail to prepare graduates for the workforce. But actually, higher education is quite cost-
96 effective. The lifetime earnings of a full-time full-year worker with a high school diploma are \$1.6
97 million, while workers with an associate’s degree earn \$2 million. Bachelor’s degree holders earn
98 a median of \$2.8 million during their career, master’s degree holders earn a median of \$3.2
99 million over their lifetimes, while doctoral degree holders earn \$4 million and professional
100 degree holders earn \$4.7 million (Georgetown University Center on Education and the
101 Workforce, 2025). More indirectly, college graduates design, create, serve, and sustain many
102 businesses and professional services. Additionally, society benefits because there is a strong
103 relationship between college education and reduction of criminal behaviors and violence
104 (Machin and Sandi, 2025).

105 One of the most important values of a university education—and this is particularly true
106 for the CSU—is social mobility, which improves the lives of all Californians and contributes to a
107 more just, equal, and equitable society. The CSU is already a leader in social mobility in one
108 sense: eight of the CSUs are in the top 20 universities in the US in the [Social Mobility Index](#),
109 which “measures the extent to which a college or university educates economically
110 disadvantaged students (with family incomes below the national median) at lower tuition and
111 graduates them into well-paying jobs.” But social mobility is not the same as economic mobility;
112 it is not (just) about earning a higher salary, but about improving social status. The [CSU](#)
113 recognizes this complexity and focuses on increasing students’ opportunities in society,
114 improving health care, narrowing equity gaps, making generational impact, etc. Similarly,
115 university-educated citizens make for a better democracy because they can think critically, and
116 more informed citizens with more curiosity are better members of their local, regional, and
117 national communities as well as the global community.

118

119

120 **Pressures on the Framework**

121

122 Broadly, three pressures will probably shape higher education over the next 15-20 years as the
123 university tries to achieve these purposes: a decline in demand for higher education (which is a

124 function of both demographics and job replacements by artificial intelligence); a general decline
125 in trust in higher education and in perceptions of its economic value; and increasing
126 government involvement at the federal and state levels in managing public higher education
127 (against a backdrop of ongoing budget pressure).

128

129 Potential Decline in Demand for Higher Education

130 The post-2008 drop in birth rates is projected to reduce the number of college-age students
131 beginning in the mid-2020s, leading to a national enrollment decline of roughly 10–15 % by the
132 mid-2030s. This phenomenon is often called the “demographic cliff” [1, 2]. This trend may be
133 more pronounced in California than in other states [3, 4].

134 In addition to the demographic cliff, generative artificial intelligence (AI) may well
135 disrupt the employment landscape by reconfiguring or replacing jobs. Although the Bureau of
136 Labor Statistics is optimistic, projecting an *overall* increase in employment over the next decade
137 [XX], evidence is mounting that white-collar entry-level jobs are most likely to be impacted by AI
138 [11] and that AI will increase labor productivity in cognitive and non-routine tasks [8, 9, 10]. AI is
139 still in an “era of ferment” [7], and there is considerable uncertainty regarding its impact. For
140 instance, there is debate as to whether AI makes work more efficient (‘augmentation’) or
141 eliminates jobs entirely (‘replacement’), although increased efficiency might lead to fewer people
142 needed to do the same work.

143 While there have often been sizable shifts in the kinds of jobs the economy provided, AI
144 has already seen unprecedented rates of user adoption [5], and there is a good chance that the
145 transformation AI will bring about will be unprecedented [6]. Arguably, the net effect might be a
146 decline in demand for knowledge workers and hence for new university graduates—though the
147 effect could also be an increased demand for university graduates with the critical thinking skills
148 to assess the products of AI.

149

150 Trust in, and Economic Value of, Higher Education

151 Even though data suggest that for the most part college is still “worth it” [16, 17], public trust in
152 US higher education has declined steadily over the past two decades, mirroring a broader
153 erosion of confidence in major institutions such as government, media, and business [13, 14, 15].
154 While universities remain respected for their contributions to research and innovation, growing
155 segments of the public now view them as expensive, inefficient, politically biased, and
156 insufficiently accountable. Skepticism has grown about whether higher education delivers
157 adequate value, with public opinion shifting toward seeing college primarily as a private
158 investment [18, 19]. This has pushed some institutions to focus on career-oriented programs at
159 the expense of liberal arts education and civic learning [20]. In addition to the rising cost of
160 tuition, the *overall* cost of attendance, which includes housing, transportation, student fees,
161 learning supplies, etc., has been identified as a barrier to accessing higher education [21].

162

163 Government Involvement

164 In recent years, governments at both the state and federal levels have taken a keener interest in

165 higher education. The year 2025 saw the dismantling of the federal Department of Education
 166 [22, 23], the withholding of research grant funding to institutions by federal agencies in order to
 167 exert pressure to change curriculum and university policies [24, 25], and the suspension of
 168 federal grants to Hispanic-Serving and Minority-Serving Institutions [26]. A new Workforce PELL
 169 Grant program may reduce funding for students wanting to follow a traditional four-year degree
 170 program, while at the same time adding to the shift towards more vocationally oriented
 171 programs [26]. A proposed earnings test would block federal funding for students pursuing
 172 programs where the earnings of graduates do not meet narrowly defined financial parameters
 173 [YY]. Tightened federal financial aid eligibility rules may also reduce funding flowing to students,
 174 and by extension to universities, as enrollment declines. Proposed cuts to the PELL program,
 175 which serves low-income families, could be substantial, with a 15% reduction in funding for PELL
 176 grants in 2026 and a reduction in the maximum award of \$1,685 (a 22% reduction over the
 177 2024-25 level) [27].

178 In California, where all three segments of public higher education are largely funded
 179 through taxes, federal grants, and private payments toward tuition, legislative involvement has
 180 increased substantially. Several years ago, the California legislature for the first time dictated
 181 CSU curriculum by mandating an Ethnic Studies requirement. More recently, the State Assembly
 182 Committee on Higher Education held three oversight and seven legislative bill hearings in 2023
 183 [31]—while it had only held two oversight hearings and no legislative bill hearings in 2021. The
 184 public policy think tank Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the advocacy groups
 185 [Campaign for College Opportunity](#) and [California Competes](#) have argued that there is a need for
 186 an oversight body to coordinate the three segments of public higher education [28].

187 The California Postsecondary Education Commission, which authorized the California
 188 Master Plan for Higher Education in the 1960s, was defunded by the state legislature in 2011. In
 189 the 2025 legislative session, the legislature passed, and the governor signed, a two-bill package,
 190 [AB1098](#) and [SB638](#), establishing the California Interagency Education Council within the state
 191 Government Operations Agency for “purposes of evaluating and addressing the changing nature
 192 of work and the economy, integrating and aligning education and employment systems,
 193 maximizing funding impact, supporting adult skill development, aligning regional education and
 194 workforce needs, and serving as a forum for discussing the impacts of intersegmental and
 195 cross-sector policy issues” (AB1098).

196 At the CSU, dwindling state funding and declining regional enrollment have led to
 197 program closures and pooling administrative resources at some campuses [29]. At the UC and
 198 the CSU, tuition represents a larger proportion of university funding than it did 15 years ago, but
 199 declining enrollment and state budget deficits will present an ongoing challenge [30].

200

201

202 **Frameworks of Student Success and Lifelong Learning**

203

204 In the face of these pressures, the CSU should hold fast to its mission of student success. In the
 205 strategic plan *CSU Forward*, the second core commitment, titled “Delivering Student Success,”

206 reads:

207 Students are at the center of every decision we make. We focus relentlessly on the
 208 actions, policies and investments needed for students to thrive academically,
 209 professionally, and personally. (17)

210 As articulated elsewhere in *CSU Forward*, one of the indicators of student success is: “Combined
 211 graduation and employment outcomes that demonstrate life-changing impact” (5). The *Student*
 212 *Success Framework* of the CSU builds on these commitments and offers a process plan:

213 Student Success in the CSU is achieved through...

- 214 • Providing personalized and collective experiences within a supportive community
 215 that prioritizes flexible and impactful learning opportunities, self-discovery and
 216 holistic growth.
- 217 • Equipping students to achieve academic excellence, career success and
 218 economic mobility through accessible, inclusive and experiential learning
 219 environments.
- 220 • Developing curricular and co-curricular pathways for each student to graduate
 221 and excel in their career and/or further study and preparing them to thrive as
 222 engaged leaders and members of society.
- 223 • Fostering lifelong relationships with students and graduates by cultivating
 224 meaningful experiences with their university, alumni and communities.

225
 226 In the Strategy Details of the *Student Success Framework*, similar items are formulated as
 227 outcomes (largely based on the Faculty Survey on Student Success conducted with CSU faculty
 228 in Spring 2025):

- 229 • Students develop self-confidence, agency, knowledge and skills that help them
 230 succeed academically, prepare for successful careers, become empowered
 231 individuals and pursue the public good as engaged citizens.
- 232 • Students experience meaningful connections and interactions with faculty to
 233 improve their understanding of how to succeed academically.
- 234 • Students engage in a culture of learning that values and promotes intellectual
 235 curiosity, professionalism and critical and rigorous thinking.
- 236 • Students engage critically with emerging technologies to explore and understand
 237 the pedagogical practices, possibilities and pitfalls of technology for their own
 238 learning.

239
 240 These commitments, plans, and outcomes surrounding student success are important especially
 241 in that they look beyond the immediate economic impact for the individual and take a more
 242 holistic view of success, encompassing professional development, critical thinking, and social
 243 engagement within a broader culture of learning. The commitments, plans, and outcomes should
 244 be elaborated in a number of ways, most importantly in terms of teaching and learning (see next
 245 section). In addition, they should be specified and expanded around levels of education and
 246 around lifelong learning.

247

248 Levels of Education

249 The CSU already serves an admirable variety of diverse student populations. While
 250 undergraduate students are in the majority, however, there are also significant numbers of
 251 certificate, credential, graduate, doctoral, and other students. Increasingly, non-traditional
 252 learners such as returning students, older students, and working parents require more workable,
 253 accessible, and adaptable learning options. Previous discussions of student success have
 254 understandably tended to focus primarily on undergrads, but most CSUs are called “Mixed
 255 Undergraduate/Graduate—Master’s” in their [Carnegie Classification](#), so it is important to
 256 consider other students. Certificates and other credentials may lead students to pursue post-
 257 baccalaureate degrees while expedited degrees in graduate education, aka 4+1 masters
 258 degrees, allow students to earn advanced degrees in as little as five years. Judicious assessment
 259 of prior learning might encourage students to pursue further education The CSUs offer practice-
 260 oriented graduate study with faculty mentorship and required culminating experiences that
 261 focus on workforce and professional development and prepare students for leadership roles and
 262 doctoral study in their fields. Within the CSU, doctoral programs are applied doctorates (such as
 263 the Ed.D. and the Doctor of Nursing Practice), and they are tied to regional and state needs.
 264 Through the Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program, the CSU supports students who commit to
 265 return to teaching and service in the CSU in their doctoral studies outside the CSU.

266

267 Lifelong Learning

268 Historically, education has been ‘front-loaded.’ School starts at six and continues to eighteen;
 269 adding another four (or more) years for a baccalaureate degree means young adults will have
 270 completed sixteen years of education before they embark on a career. Unfortunately, that is
 271 often where their formal educational journey ends. As the demands of the workplace change
 272 more rapidly, knowledge in many domains is becoming outdated or redundant more quickly,
 273 which is sometimes referred to as the shortening ‘half-life’ of knowledge. Extending the length of
 274 ‘front-loaded’ education increases debt and reduces pay-back time and does nothing to address
 275 the waning ‘half-life’ problem.

276 Instead, student success means their involvement in lifelong learning. This in turn
 277 requires instilling in students of the CSU a culture of learning, i.e., a mindset to continue to learn
 278 throughout their adult lives. Practically, as the ‘half-life’ of knowledge acquired at the university
 279 shortens, ‘up-skilling’ will be increasingly common and frequent, and students who pursue such
 280 studies at the CSU should be considered successful. More generally, students might return to
 281 expand their knowledge in any field: often, mid-career professionals are finally in a place where
 282 they can explore other fields out of pure curiosity rather than with a utilitarian goal.

283

284

285 **Frameworks of CSU Pedagogy through 2040**

286

287 Active Learning

288 The most important pedagogical imperative that will ensure these student success outcomes in
 289 the CSU going forward is active learning. An active learning pedagogy is the best response to
 290 challenges such as doubts about the value of higher education and disengagement of students
 291 and the public, and it is how the CSU can address increasing reliance on technology (especially
 292 AI) and create engaged citizens from its diverse range of students.

293 Active learning means using “instructional activities involving students in doing things
 294 and thinking about what they are doing” (Bonwell and Eison, 1991, 19). Active learning focuses on
 295 developing students’ soft skills rather than simply conveying facts—it sees learning as
 296 processing ideas rather than soaking up information. Active learning gives students agency in
 297 the learning process by having them discuss, write about, and/or apply information they have
 298 previously read in a way that encourages constructing knowledge and using higher-order
 299 thinking. Through active learning, students absorb not just information but ways to process it,
 300 and at the same time they think about why the material they are learning is important. In active
 301 learning, students also explore their own attitudes and values.

302 Active learning is a response to doubts about the value of higher education because
 303 students actively reflect on the importance of what they are learning, and because they learn
 304 how to learn. Even if the information they acquire in their original time at university is
 305 superseded as the demands of the workplace change, they will know how to engage with new
 306 material. With the internet and especially with AI, acquiring information is no longer a challenge,
 307 but thinking through that information critically is taught through active learning. Active learning
 308 can be used in any major; there are studies demonstrating its efficacy in the humanities, social
 309 sciences, STEM disciplines, etc. (Freeman, Kozantis, Theobald). General education could be seen
 310 as a special laboratory for active learning, since in these courses instruction often focuses on
 311 the process or theory more than the knowledge or result anyway. Active learning is already wide-
 312 spread in the CSU in experiential learning, particularly internships—not just as job training, but
 313 as a what to explore career paths.

314 Active learning can re-engage students who are currently disengaged for a variety of
 315 reasons, including economic struggles, distractions by social media, reliance on AI, etc. It has a
 316 social component that is not present in the frontal classroom. Active learning can reduce the
 317 gender gap and the achievement gap, and it even contributes to student well-being (Ribeiro-
 318 Silva). There is some evidence that it contravenes academic dishonesty, which is particularly
 319 important in the age of AI (Du Rocher). The joy that comes with active learning contributes to
 320 students becoming lifelong learners. Conversely, instructors need to be properly trained, and
 321 class sizes need to be small enough, to allow for personalized pathways or ‘mass customization’
 322 for students.

323

324 Curricular Offerings

325 In addition to active learning, increasing the variety of curricular offerings of the CSU—
 326 structured differently in terms of time and delivery—will help respond to pressures on higher
 327 education. This will require flexibility on the parts of the faculty and administration. The
 328 university’s hours of operation might have to change, including offering instruction year-round.

329 Along with the traditional four-year degree (often stretched to six years because of the lived
330 realities of CSU students), the CSU should explore flexible models such as shorter-term
331 offerings, stackable credentials, micro-credentials, off-campus branches and laboratories,
332 certificates offering a direct path to employment, and three-year options. This is not to say that
333 all of these options *should* be instituted or that all programs have to innovate for the sake of
334 innovation (rather than improvement), but rather that they should be rigorously examined in
335 terms of what learning and benefits they yield for students. Collaboration and cooperation
336 among campuses, businesses, and local governments, with an acknowledgement of return on
337 investment, might also yield favorable outcomes.

338

339 Physical Spaces

340 Emphasis on active learning and changes in curricular offerings might require reconfiguring the
341 physical and online spaces of higher education in the CSU. A typical classroom at university
342 today is often portrayed (even in CSU promotional materials) as an auditorium with fixed and
343 raked chairs, a professor at the front of the room, and a chalkboard or whiteboard (or maybe a
344 computer screen) spanning left to right at the front of the room. Students sit, taking notes, in
345 silo seats that force their focus to the front of the space, eyes on a person talking *at* them, not
346 *with* them. In contrast, smaller spaces (and classes) that enable interaction are necessary for
347 active learning—and they are productive because students no longer simply want to be talked *at*.
348 Research supports the idea that natural light promotes [cognitive functions](#), so physical spaces
349 should be configured accordingly.

350 The CSU has already recognized the importance of creating innovative classroom spaces
351 both through new building projects and its proposal for the state to fund deferred maintenance
352 of physical spaces. It has requested \$1.1 billion to address critical facility and infrastructure
353 projects in its [2026-27 Operating Budget Plan](#); however, this only would fund 13% of the
354 deferred maintenance system-wide, which is currently estimated to total [\\$7.7 billion](#). The
355 construction of new classroom and learning spaces that are on the forefront of design stands as
356 part of the long-term solution.

357

358 Online Spaces

359 The CSU is also already in the process of improving its online education in hybrid, hyflex,
360 synchronous online, and asynchronous online modalities. In 2018, [CSU Fully Online](#) was
361 launched as an attempt to bring campus efforts across the system together as one and to give
362 students options that may help them to piece together more online offerings to reach their
363 degree goals. With better online education the CSU might be stronger competition for
364 institutions such as [Arizona State University Online](#). Developments in online instruction,
365 especially the increased implementation of modalities that respond to the challenges posed by
366 AI, are another, most fiscally achievable, component of how the classroom will continue to
367 change in the coming years.

368 Active learning in physical as well as online spaces can foster growth, ideas, community
369 building, and other opportunity for students. Sustainable community spaces represent the

370 learning environment that our students and faculty need to engage in human-to-human learning
 371 in the physical and online spaces that mirror global work environments of interacting with those
 372 virtually and in co-working spaces. It will be imperative to establish the CSU as a place where
 373 physical and online learning spaces support emotional and psychological knowledge and growth.

374
 375

376 **Frameworks for Measuring Student Success**

377

378 If student success encompasses students thriving academically, professionally, and personally,
 379 and if student success can be achieved through active learning in physical and online spaces as
 380 well as reimagined curricular offerings, those forms of success should be measured. Since the
 381 CSU is trying to produce civically engaged individuals, we should find out if our graduates are
 382 indeed engaged. Similarly, if the classroom and the pedagogy of the future focus on active
 383 learning, important factors contributing to active learning should be measured. In some cases,
 384 benchmarks need to be established, and then measurements should be conducted periodically—
 385 often enough to gather meaningful information and with enough time to effect change in
 386 between. After each assessment, a feedback loop should be established in order to determine
 387 what has improved, what has not changed, and how the metrics can be improved. Metrics might
 388 include:

389

- 390 • Academic success might be measured through a variety of grade point averages. Since
 391 that measure is always suspect due to grade inflation, other more independent
 392 measurements such as GRE scores, credentialing of students, and other nationally
 393 standardized assessments might be explored. Standardized tests are controversial, but
 394 nationally they are making a [comeback](#) because evidence about their biases and effects
 395 on equity is being reevaluated.
- 396 • Professional success might be measured in terms of students entering careers in their
 397 fields. But more importantly, the CSU should examine what professions former students
 398 are engaged in 10 or 20 years after graduation. Measurements might investigate whether
 399 graduates work in the fields they studied or in other fields. If they are now in other fields,
 400 the measurement should explore *what skills* learned in the CSU they are still using and
 401 *how* they shifted their career paths. In other words, measurements need to capture the
 402 distinction between knowledge learned at the CSU and skills acquired at the CSU. This
 403 kind of information might be collected in surveys sent to all graduates.
- 404 • Personal success, including civic engagement, might be established through surveys of
 405 graduates that ask about community engagement, volunteering, etc. It might be possible
 406 to measure something as simple as what percentage of former students regularly
 407 participate in local, state, or national elections. Building on the previous point, the CSU
 408 should measure whether graduates are *satisfied* with their lives and careers, i.e., whether
 409 the CSU helped produce the emotional and psychological mindsets to set students on
 410 their way to meaningful and fulfilling lives. Part of this could be discovering whether

- 411 graduates are actually engaged in life-long learning.
- 412 • There is a body of literature on measuring active learning that could be mined to
- 413 determine the best methods of assessing active learning (Arruda, Brame, Young). Other
- 414 factors related to active learning such as student-faculty ratios, tenure-track density,
- 415 physical and digital facilities, or high-impact practices could be investigated. Any results
- 416 should be disaggregated according to face-to-face vs. online learning. The goal would be
- 417 for the metrics to improve from one period assessment to the next.

418

419 Some of these measurements are qualitative, and others are quantitative. The CSU must avoid

420 falling into the trap of only accepting quantitative measurements since measuring things like

421 career satisfaction and civic engagement purely in numbers does not capture their complexity.

422 At the same time, it should be clear that it is extremely difficult to disentangle the contribution

423 of higher education to any of these measures from other factors such as family background, the

424 economy, the specific professions, and pure luck. Any quantitative assessment would be an

425 enormous undertaking, but it is possible to construct questionnaires that would show correlating

426 patterns.

427 With buy-in from the Chancellor’s Office and the faculty, carefully constructed and

428 measured assessments in teaching and learning could yield results that would improve the CSU

429 and make it the model for higher education in the US for decades to come. If investment in the

430 future is targeted accordingly, the CSU in 2040 will continue to provide opportunities,

431 encourage students, advance knowledge and research, prepare citizens, and serve communities.

433

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- 550 Some remaining questions from the Student Success section:
551 Are there data on how many CSU profs were educated in the CSU? Graduate education is a
552 component of the CSU faculty pipeline and faculty diversity initiatives/strategies.
553 Are there things from the Faculty Survey that we support that never made it into the student
554 success framework. [High Impact Practices...]
555 From the 21-22 Draft? Resolution that Simon shared
556 It also links graduate education to economic mobility and statewide impact.
557