**Note: Currently at 3 ½ pages, page goal is 2 to 3**

**STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

In February 2020, Central adopted a new 10-year strategic plan, [*Strategic Plan 2030 - Changing Lives, Building Communities; Central to Connecticut*](https://www.ccsu.edu/strategicplan/) (SP2030), that is at the forefront of planning and resource allocation. Also new are the increased transparency of historical [expenditures](https://www.ccsu.edu/fiscalaffairs/historicalexpenditureinformation.html) and the regular assessment of initiatives to ensure effective use of resources. Projects and budget requests are now prioritized based on their alignment with the SP2030 and other University initiatives. The annual budget process is well documented and [publicized](https://www.ccsu.edu/fiscalaffairs/budget_guidelines.html) with significant involvement from across the campus. At a minimum, the planning and budgeting process includes the President and her Executive Committee (ExCom), elected members of [University Planning and Budget Committee](https://web.ccsu.edu/UPBC/) (UPBC), and [Integrated Planning Council](https://www.ccsu.edu/ipc/) (IPC). Depending on the request, other committees such as Facilities Planning Committee and Senate may also be involved in the process. Collectively, these new processes and procedures ensure shared governance.

2.2 The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) continues to play an essential role in the facilitation and effective acquisition and analysis of data, leading to more effective data-based planning and implementation decisions. Since spring 2018, the OIRA has hired an Assessment Coordinator, converted a clerical position to a professional administrative position responsible for providing a higher level of support to the more senior staff, and increased the number of Institutional Research Specialists from two to three, one of which carries more responsibility at the senior level. In 2019, the director was promoted to Associate Vice President of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and is the Accreditation Liaison Officer to NECHE. In summary, there has been an increase in staffing and enhanced data use and analysis across campus.

The foundation of effective planning is good information. CCSU relies on the [OIRA](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/) to collect, evaluate, and publish institutional data, largely through its [Fact Book](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/data/factbook.html). The office oversees and coordinates all University-wide opinion [surveys](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/surveys/), captures a robust amount of student and faculty data at each census date, and is the repository for [assessment](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/) data both at the program level and for General Education (GenEd). (2.2) The OIRA [Homepage](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/) includes links to CCSU’s list of Peer Institutions, the Dashboard, and the Common Data Set, as well as the Student Achievement Measures (SAM). Within the Institutional Data portal are links to campus specific [benchmarking](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/data/reports.html) reports such as the Delaware Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, comparative information on salaries (both available only to the CCSU community) and IPEDS Data Feedback Reports. The [Fact Book](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/data/factbook.html) includes trend data on admissions, staffing, tuition and fees, enrollments, completions, student success rates, and more. Many of these reports are also disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender; examples include enrollment and completion by major, retention rates, and graduation rates. The reports on faculty-metrics provide current and historical data on faculty activity and productivity by department and by school. Additional information is also presented on the [Consumer Information and Required Disclosures](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/consumerInformation.html) page; data here is largely selected based on requirements as outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Examples include the price of attendance, [educational loan debt](https://www.ccsu.edu/_files/list/1485/loan%20debt%20of%202021-22%20baccalaureate%20recipients%20at%20CCSU.pdf), [student outcomes](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/files/GraduationRate.pdf), and [campus security](https://www.ccsu.edu/police/cleryReport.html).

**PLANNING**

(2.3) CCSU employs a systematic, purposeful, and thoughtful approach to planning and evaluation. The University focuses its planning process following the priorities established in the SP2030. The SP2030 is the result of a year-long process that formally engaged more than 70 students, faculty, and staff from across all divisions of the University. During this process, Central reaffirmed its [Mission](https://www.ccsu.edu/about/mission/) Statement and Elements of Distinction, recognized the need to create a Vision statement, and identified a set of nine Core Values; collectively, these are all presented on the CCSU Mission webpage. The Faculty Senate (Senate) adopted the SP2030 in [February 2020](https://web.ccsu.edu/facultysenate/minutes1920feb10.asp) and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) Board of Regents (BOR) approved the new Vision statement in [March 2020](https://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/ASA%20Agenda-3-13-2020%20FINAL.pdf?34755). Briefly, the SP2030 has five overarching goals: 1) Enhancing academic excellence and preparing graduates who thrive in a changing economy; 2) Increasing access to higher education and ensuring student success; 3) Fostering an inclusive and safe campus culture that values and encourages individuals to participate in a free and respectful exchange of ideas; 4) Strengthening stewardship by advancing scholarship, service learning, and community meant for the public good; and 5) Assuring financial sustainability for the future.

The five strategic goals are each supported by a set of Objectives, Strategies, and Key Activities that, when combined, contribute to the overall success of the plan. Every goal begins with a narrative and a set of definitions to provide clarity and context for the reader. Each goal is also accompanied by a set of metrics that serves as the assessment of the plan. Key Activities that will help CCSU accomplish its goals are outlined in the supplemental [Action Plan](https://www.ccsu.edu/strategicplan/files/SP2030-CompleteActionPlan.pdf), that guides strategic planning efforts while remaining flexible and responsive to changing conditions and needs.

2.4 & 2.5) Like most public institutions, CCSU’s revenue is driven by enrollment. In our 2018 Self Study, CCSU had set an aspirational enrollment goal of 15,000 students. This goal has been revised to 12,500 students, returning to the student body size of the early 2010’s, and is still an aspirational target that Central would like to achieve. In Fall 2022, after taking a close look at the enrollment landscape, Central developed a Strategic Recruitment and Enrollment Plan (SREP) that aligns with the goals presented in the SP2030 as well as reaching our revised goal of 12,500 students by 2030. This tactical plan is designed to guide both graduate and undergraduate student recruitment for the next two years. The SRP takes into consideration the changing demographics in Connecticut, the impact of the pandemic on the preparedness of high school students for college-level work, and an increasingly diverse student body including non-traditional students (See the Reflective Essay in Standard 8). However, aspirational enrollment goals are not the same as realistic financial planning goals. CCSU’s fiscal planning is realistic. Pre-pandemic, the spending plan was based on a rolling enrollment average spanning three-to-five-years. However, the pandemic and its lingering effects, coupled with downward trending state demographics (fewer students graduating from high school), and Central’s 11 percent decline in enrollment since Fall 2020 have resulted in CCSU adjusting its financial planning. Central is not alone in experiencing enrollment challenges; institutions across the [CSCU System](https://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/FallHeadcount_V2022-12-19.pdf) also experienced significant declines, yet Central was the only institution in the CSCU System to implement a budget cut. In fiscal year (FY) 2021, CCSU permanently cut $13.1M from its financial plan. In addition to the budget cut, Central now plans for enrollment to either remain flat or decline by one percent for the 2023-24 budget cycle.

Consistent with Goal Five of the SP2030, *Assuring Sustainability for the Future*, which focuses largely on fiscal sustainability, Central’s careful analyses of state funding and enrollment projections, while leading to difficult conversations and decisions, has resulted in greater fiscal stability. For example, in 2021, Central transitioned from automatically refilling most vacant positions to requiring budget managers and Division leaders to re-evaluate each open position. If it was determined that the same position or skillset was not needed, it was reclassified, moved to another department to address institutional priorities, or left unfilled. This cost saving strategy has been implemented throughout all divisions at the University. As a result, CCSU continues to be fiscally sound, and was the *only* institution within the CSCU System to significantly build up its reserves in 2021-22, allowing Central reallocate resources to strengthen student support services, maintain academic programs, and implement innovative practices aligned with the SP2030.

Central’s contingency planning is not limited to fiscal; Information Technology (IT) has implemented extensive preparedness initiatives. For example, before we knew about COVID-19, IT had converted all employee computers from a computer-based storage system to cloud-based storage where files could be accessed from any workstation. IT has also transitioned nearly all personal workstations to laptops, further facilitating the ability for faculty and staff to work from any location.

**EVALUATION**

2.6) The OIRA is also responsible for assessing the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of programs and coordinates the faculty led assessment of General Education (GenEd) outcomes (see Standard 8 or 4?). In addition to data on the OIRA homepage, there are also links to survey results and to the assessment of student learning on the website. From the [Assessment](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/) link, there is information on the faculty-led [Academic Assessment Committee](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/AAC/) (AAC) and its related policies, reporting guidelines, and the resulting annual assessment reports for each academic program (available only to the CCSU community). In addition, there are also links to the assessments results for each GenEd learning outcome and to the external Academic Program Review (APR) process.

The original APR policy was adopted by the Faculty Senate (Senate) in 2012 and strengthened in [2019](https://web.ccsu.edu/facultysenate/minutes1819apr22.asp). External APR takes two forms at CCSU. Academic programs that have learning-outcomes based discipline-specific accreditation, follow the timeline, standards, and expectations established by that organization. All other programs are required to complete APR every five years. Included in the APR self-study are five overarching sections based upon questions drawn from existing annual departmental and assessment reports. The prompts include the Academic Program Profile (program description, enrollments, completions, etc.), Learning Outcome Assessment, Faculty-Student Engagement, Future Plans, and Alignment with the Strategic Plan.

The APR process is coordinated with the five-year review cycle of the AAC that begins with a [Full Report](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/AAP.html) focusing on the assessment of student learning in the academic program. Using a [rubric](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/AAC/files/AACScoringRubric-Website.pdf), the AAC evaluates the report and provides feedback to the department in time for the department to adjust its assessment processes prior to their external APR, which is completed the following year. The formal process ends with a meeting where the Department Chair, Provost, Dean(s), and representative(s) from the OIRA, review the feedback and document the agreed upon action items and corresponding timeline. This process serves to: (1) enhance student learning and success; (2) improve the quality and effectiveness of curricula and instruction; and (3) assist in the allocation of resources – departments are encouraged to use the feedback from the APR when they put forward requests during the annual budget cycle. Results of the most recent assessments are available in the E-Series reports as is a listing of the programs that are evaluated by discipline-specific accrediting organizations.

2.6 & 2.7) Central has a long history of conducting surveys on a regular schedule to capture information that is not readily available elsewhere. When possible, national student opinion surveys are used, and the results are posted on the OIRA [Survey](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/surveys/) page. Campus climate survey results are posted on the [Changing Campus Culture](https://www.ccsu.edu/ccc/) website. The benchmark data that comes with these surveys are invaluable in providing context which helps in the interpretation of the information and identification of actionable items. CCSU has also created and administered two in-house surveys, one on Food and Housing Insecurity (annual) and a satisfaction survey that is administered to [alumni](https://www.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/surveys/alumniSurvey.html) three to five years after they graduated (administered every three years).(2.8) In 2021-22, the results from the campus climate surveys were used to re-imagine and give specific direction to the Presidential Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A significant outcome has been the creation of five workgroups who are focused on 1) Leadership and Professional Development for Faculty and Staff; 2) Educating Our Campus Community on Who Our Students Are; 3) Hiring and Retaining a More Diverse Faculty and Staff; 4) Creating Community, Cultivating Respect and Facilitating Communication with Each Other; and 5) Supporting the Needs of Our Students. Their first progress report will be due to the President in 2023.

Progress on the goals of SP2030 is evaluated with a series of metrics and activities.   For example, one of the activities in the Action Plan, Goal 2. Objective 1.A.2 is to “Evaluate and invest in student support and wellness services such as advising, tutoring, mentoring, and counseling.” To assess progress, Central expanded its analyses of retention and graduation rates to include term-to-term monitoring of students participating in mentoring programs. The 2017 cohort of Success Central (SC) freshmen and sophomores and the inaugural 2020 cohort of First Year Connected (FYC) freshmen earned more credits, had higher grade point averages (GPA,) and higher retention rates than their demographically similar comparison groups. After four years, students in SC cohorts retained and/or graduated at higher rates; the differential for the Fall 2017 participants was 19 percent after four years while students who participated in the Fall 2020 program have retained at eight percent higher rate than their comparison group after two years. Fall 2020 Freshmen who participated in FYC earned 3.6 more credits, had slightly higher grade point averages (GPA), and retention to Fall 2022 was six percent higher than their demographically similar comparison group.

Progress on most metrics is updated regularly and communicated to the campus community via the website and/or open forums. The information provided on our progress has been and will continue to be used to inform decision making and resource allocations. Going forward, Central will continue to evaluate the SP2030 metrics; supporting activities will be monitored and adjusted as necessary to ensure relevancy.