October 20, 2015 Campus Forum “Exploring Meaning”

Thank you for your interest in the Campus Forum “Exploring Meaning.” This event is an important one for the Working Group and the campus as a whole. WASC has asked us to reflect on what our degree means from a broader, holistic perspective. Last semester we began exploring this question using smaller faculty and student forums and now have come up with some initial “themes” and “meaning statements” that we would like to receive feedback on. The purpose of this forum is to solicit feedback on the “meaning statements” below and help us uncover the concrete examples that provide us with the evidence that can be referred to in our WASC report. Our goal is to use your feedback to create a "Meaning of the Degree" essay for the WASC report.

The forum will use a round-robin structure. Please take a moment to read through the statements below and during the event, you will have time to move around to visit several stations and discuss and provide feedback on three different statements related to meaning of the degree. If you don’t get a chance to say all that you want to today, please do go the WASC website (add link here) to provide additional feedback!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND SUPPORT OF OUR WORK WITH WASC!

Meaning Statements

The Meaning of the Degree and Expected Learning Outcomes—Using the Baccalaureate Learning Goals to describe the undergraduate learning experience.

The meaning of the Sacramento State bachelor’s degree is rooted in our Baccalaureate Learning Goals. (Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals for the 21st Century, ) Completion of a Sacramento State undergraduate curriculum allows students to achieve these goals and thus prepare themselves intellectually, socially, and ethically to engage responsibly with the world around them.

Summary of the California State University Baccalaureate Learning Goals for the 21st Century

- Competence in the Disciplines: The student will have the ability to demonstrate the competencies and values found in one major field of study as well as an informed understanding of other disciplines outside the major.
- Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World and engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring, will be acquired through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts.
- Intellectual and Practical Skills: Students will acquire such skills, including inquiry and analysis, critical thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative and information literacy, teamwork and problem solving by practicing them extensively across the curriculum.
- Personal and Social Responsibility: Students, through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges will develop local, global, and intercultural competence, the ability to reason and act ethically, and the foundations and skills for lifelong learning.
- Integrative Learning, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment, will take place across general and specialized studies.

[Found at: http://www.csus.edu/acaf/ge/Baccalaureate%20Learning%20Goals%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%202009.pdf]
The Meaning of the Degree and the Graduate Experience
Graduate degrees provide a qualitatively different transformative experience to that provided by undergraduate degrees. Students in graduate programs are expected to demonstrate a deep and comprehensive mastery of a finite and narrow body of knowledge in a specific content area; to develop intellectual and practical skills to an advanced level; to move from being consumers of knowledge to being producers and disseminators of knowledge; to strengthen professional identity; to be metacognitive, curious, and responsible; and to develop leadership skills and the ability to function autonomously. Thus, graduate degrees provide both private benefit to the individual and social benefit to the region.

The Meaning of the Degree and the Distinctive Experience—The Student Perspective
Sacramento State students define degree attainment in terms of four elements:

1. Economic Impact and social mobility, e.g. A "better life, a better job, a better future."

2. Character and Identity development: greater confidence, competitive edge, persistence, achievement, and pride (in self and on behalf of family)

3. Intellectual, Emotional and Social Growth: e.g. "Stretches" students, moves them beyond their comfort zones, mind-opening, helped them develop leadership goals, intellectual and practical skills, and knowledge

4. Socio-cultural Impact: development of social connections, networking, mentoring, social skills, and team-building

The Meaning of the Degree and the Distinctive Experience—Experiential Education and Community Engagement
At Sacramento State, we value experiential education and community engagement and we provide opportunities to connect students with experiences beyond the classroom as part of a student's curricular (e.g., service learning, internships, etc.) and co-curricular (e.g., community service, volunteering, etc.) experience prior to graduation. A major objective of these opportunities is to prepare students to assume roles as domestically and globally informed, empathetic, courageous and engaged leaders ready to serve in their communities, the State, the nation and abroad.

The Meaning of the Degree and the Distinctive Experience—Diversity and Inclusion
At Sacramento State diversity and inclusion are an integral part of every aspect of our student’s academic and co-curricular experiences and therefore an important component of the degree experience. It is a part of our values statement and strategic plan. Our definition of diversity includes race, ethnicity, first generation university students, gender identity, sexual identity, age, socio-economic status, and veteran students and as such, is reflected in our graduation requirements, student success initiatives, student population and the student experience.