

4.3. Planning processes are informed by appropriately defined and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, and include consideration of evidence of educational effectiveness, including student learning.

Evidence:

The university-wide **strategic planning process** illustrates SSU's movement in the direction of creating a "culture of evidence" upon which decision making is based. In the draft plan issued in January 2007, each macro area of concern in the university wide process is presented in terms of the strategic goals, objectives, and initiatives. For example, the strategic goal in the macro area "Academic Programs" is to "develop challenging, innovative, intellectually rigorous academic programs that engage students and faculty in life-long learning, critical thinking, inquiry, and reflection." As part of this, the objectives "provide an excellent teaching and learning environment" and are supported by several initiatives, including lowering the SFR, supporting student engagement activities, and supporting the critical role of the library. For each other macro area and its associated objectives, a list of specific initiatives that would help accomplish the objectives is provided.

The **Academic Affairs** strategic planning process also illustrates the fact that the university's planning processes rely on many forms of data. The **Institutional Research** office (IR), which is part of the Office of the Provost, handles a large array of different data sets, both quantitative and qualitative, which are collected, analyzed, and disseminated by this office. For example, the IR website includes links to Sonoma State University's Annual Reports, which are reviewed by the President's Extended **Cabinet**. The IR website also includes SSU departments' self-assessment reports, data on student retention and graduation rates, and enrollment statistics. The IR office also provides the "Common Data Set," containing basic information about many aspects of Sonoma State. In addition, the IR office provides a wealth of other data and analyses pursuant to its broad mission of "identifying issues of importance to the university, providing information concerning these issues . . . and to stimulate conversations about these findings to inform policy and procedures of the university."

Performance indicators for Sonoma State University are also available through the **CSU Accountability** index, which provides data on a variety of indicators (defined by the Chancellor's Office) of university performance.

In addition, each department conducts a periodic assessment of its academic effectiveness according to the guidelines of SSU's [Program Review Policy](#), with the results available to guide department curriculum planning. The [SSU Assessment](#) website includes a review of departments' curriculum assessment plans, including how departments use the assessment results to change their curricula.