

# Institutional Report Certification Form

To: WASC Senior College and University Commission

Re: Reaffirmation During the 2025-2026 AY, TPR application for San Diego State University

From: President Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.  
San Diego State University  
5500 Campanile Drive  
San Diego, CA 92182

This report is submitted in support of our institution's accreditation review.

I affirm the accuracy of the information presented and the institution's intention to comply fully with WSCUC's Standards and policies.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive Officer

Name: Adela de la Torre

Title: President

Date: April 10, 2023

## **TPR Proposal – San Diego State University**

### ***Executive summary***

San Diego State University proposes two themes for its Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation – “Redefining Student Success” and “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Everything We Do”. Both themes are central to SDSU’s educational philosophy, are primary components of SDSU’s Strategic Plan (see Appendix A for activities) and require and receive commitment from all units on campus. The themes represent ideals that are vital to the student experience and to SDSU’s mission of advancing and ensuring education serves as a pathway for social mobility and financial security.

### ***Overview of the institution***

Since its founding in 1897, San Diego State has grown to become a leading public research university. SDSU is proud to be an exceptionally diverse, transnational university and holds designations as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). Each year, SDSU provides more than 36,000 students with the opportunity to participate in an academic curriculum distinguished by direct contact with faculty and an international emphasis that prepares them for a global future.

SDSU is the oldest higher education institution in San Diego, uniquely situated only 30 minutes north of the U.S.-Mexico border on Kumeyaay land. The university is fully committed to excellent teaching, meaningful research and service to our regional community, the state, and across the nation.

Launched in 2020, SDSU has implemented a five-year strategic plan, “We Rise We Defy: Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives”. The strategic plan was met with wide-spread approval and is over 60% implemented. SDSU is also in the process of developing SDSU Mission Valley, a mixed-use, medium-density development that is transit-oriented and will expand the university’s educational, research, entrepreneurial, and technology transfer programs. The university is expanding access to education through strategic investment in SDSU Imperial Valley by offering degree programs critical to workforce needs in the region and through investment in Global Campus by improving educational access to adult learners. SDSU is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. About 54 percent of students are of color, the university is recognized for our military and veteran program and ranked as a top college for LGBTQ+ students.

### ***Process for the development of themes***

The campus undertook an extensive consultative process to identify the two themes presented in this proposal. Starting in September 2022, Provost Hector Ochoa and Accreditation Liaison Officer Madhavi McCall, through the shared governance process, obtained approval from the President, University Senate, Council of Vice Presidents, and the Academic Dean’s Council, to create a WSCUC Task Force. The resulting task force is composed of leaders from across campus including representatives for each university Vice President, the President, the University Senate, academic colleges, Imperial Valley, Associated Students, and the library. The WSCUC Committee was convened in October 2022 and unanimously approved pursuing the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation, a decision supported by the President, Council of Vice Presidents, Academic Deans Council, and University Senate. After receiving approval for the TPR from WSCUC, the committee started brainstorming potential themes, eventually settling on “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” and “Student Success”. These two themes were approved by the President, Council of Vice Presidents, Academic Deans Council, and University Senate. In

January of 2023, the WSCUC task force unanimously voted to present “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Everything We Do” and “Redefining Student Success” to WSCUC.

***Themes: Redefining Student Success and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Everything We Do***

A. Starting with “Redefining Student Success,” SDSU ensures that all members of the campus community are prepared to advance student success by deepening the quality of learning and closing equity gaps, by expanding access to affordable, high-quality university undergraduate and graduate education for the people of our region and beyond, and by increasing programming, resources, and capacity to provide mental health, wellness and basic needs support. We understand that supporting the student both inside and outside the classroom is critical to student success. While traditional measures of student success like graduation rates, DFW analysis, and equity gaps remain central to evaluating student progress (CFR 2.10), since its last WSCUC reaffirmation, SDSU has implemented several policies to promote academic and *personal* well-being (CFR 2.13), increase a sense of belonging, and open access to the university to underserved populations (CFR 1.4).

For instance, to promote academic success, the institution has increased the available number of academic advisors (CFR 2.12) and created a coordinated care advising model, increased support for math and writing courses (CFR 2.13), undertaken an assessment of our general education program (CFR 2.2, 2.6, 4.1, 4.4), implemented automatic enrollment for at risk student groups (CFR 2.10), created a 1-unit common core class for all incoming freshmen, and provided support for undergraduate student research (over 1700 undergraduate students participate in research). To support a student’s personal well-being, the university has expanded its Economic Crisis Response Team, a group that helps students find temporary housing, food, medical support, and other emergency needs (CFR 2.13). The campus has opened a student food bank, hired a Chief Wellness and Compliance officer, and significantly increased mental health support (CFR 2.13). The Graduate Division is evaluating ways in which graduate student compensation can be increased and more affordable health care options provided (CFR 2.13). SDSU converted from a prepay to a post-pay campus to allow students to register for classes even if their financial aid is not finalized and we have eliminated holds on registration for minor fee balances. Our new transfer center provides a space for students to create community and our residential learning groups help students make connections to others with similar disciplinary interests (CFR 2.14). During the pandemic, SDSU offered training for online teaching to faculty (CFR 3.3) and computer equipment support to students (CFR 2.13). These changes have already led an increase in graduation and retention rates and a decrease in equity gaps.

In addition, the University has significantly increased its commitment to the Imperial Valley by expanding our academic programming (Public Health, Nursing) to support the work force needs of the area. The Second Chance Pell program will bring educational opportunities to incarcerated individuals and Global Campus now has new degree-completion, certificate, and credential programs to help adult learners enter or re-enter higher education. Global Campus also supports SDSU’s outreach to the country of Georgia. Several of our graduate programs work collaboratively with schools, hospitals, and industry to create internships and partnerships for students.

SDSU will continue to support student success by improving its current practices and creating new student support measures. Since most of these programs were initiated a few years before or during the pandemic, we have not been able to fully gauge their effectiveness (CFR 2.11). SDSU has undertaken a comprehensive assessment plan for co-curriculars and student support measures (CFR 2.11) and has also increased emphasis on assessment of academic programs (CFR 4.1, 4.4). Moreover, in addition to refining practices already in place, SDSU initiated a comprehensive space analysis to determine how

space can be allocated to help foster community (CFR 1.4, 2.13). We are evaluating our enrollment and registration policies to reduce barriers to timely graduation and increase course availability (CFR 2.12). Our academic review guidelines are being edited to encourage departments to identify and eliminate institutional obstacles to student success (CFR 2.7). SDSU increased mentoring for faculty, staff, and students to help campus community members feel supported. We are reevaluating the use of high-stakes examinations in certain classes and implementing more support for high DFW classes through supplemental instruction (CFR 2.10, 2.13). Our entrepreneurial program is one of the best in the nation. In short, every division on campus is committed to supporting the success of students, both academically and in personal development and well-being, and to increase access higher education. As SDSU develops Mission Valley, we anticipate significantly greater opportunities to expand services for students and intend on using lessons learned during the reaffirmation process to guide those opportunities.

In our institutional report, SDSU expects to show an exceptionally strong commitment to student success, to provide assessment data regarding the effectiveness of many of these measures, and to provide evidence of SDSU's outreach to underrepresented populations. We anticipate our continuous improvement activities will provide guidance on how to further refine our programs in support of students. We expect to be able to demonstrate a steady decline in equity gaps and increase in graduation rates and student retention since our last reaffirmation. Assessment of co-curriculars (usage and satisfaction scores) and student outreach should provide more evidence that student well-being measures are improving. Overall, we intend on using the reaffirmation process to take a deep dive into our student success programs, both academic and overall well-being, and create support structures where needed to ensure continuous improvement.

B. Our second proposed TPR theme, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Everything We Do" is a university imperative because a truly diverse and equitable community is a core indicator of success. Taken from our strategic plan, this theme involves ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives across campus are aligned and implemented consistently, effectively and efficiently. We foster and sustain an environment where all students, faculty, staff, and alumni feel welcomed, supported, and valued by the university, and we recruit, retain and advance students, faculty and staff who can and will effectively support the diverse student body and communities served by SDSU.

SDSU has already initiated several strategies to ensure DEI (CFR 1.4) is embedded in university policies and programs. For instance, all hires on campus must support inclusive excellence and all faculty search committee members must take implicit bias training (CFR 3.2). Since its last reaffirmation, the University created the position of Chief Diversity Officer and Director for the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination, the Center for Inclusive Excellence, and the Office for Graduate Life and Diversity. We include an inclusion representative on all faculty search committees (CFR 2.9). The university created nine cultural centers (with our Black Resource Center celebrating its 5<sup>th</sup> birthday this year) and several faculty and staff resource groups. The university's commitment to diversity is evident through its cluster hires and its increased support for ethnic studies programs (CFR 1.4). SDSU supports curriculum development to ensure diverse topics are taught in classes, uses immersive technology to help faculty understand different perspectives (called Empathy Lens), and requires all units to have DEI plans. New faculty, staff, and students take implicit bias and inclusive communications trainings and are made familiar with SDSU's HSI identity and connection to the Kumeyaay (CFR 3.2), including an introduction of our voluntary land acknowledgment. SDSU is proud to have recently obtained the AANAPISI designation. Our Artist-in-Residence and campus arts installations focus on diverse cultures. In 2023, the President created a Blue-Ribbon Task Force to study gender-based violence and we are in the process of hiring a second Sexual Assault Victim Advocate. The university re-named two buildings, without the typical funding requirements, to honor individuals from SDSU who are from underrepresented

communities. Although there is still work to be done, SDSU has seen some reduction in equity gaps and increase in retention rates among our URM, first generation, and Pell-eligible students.

Just as importantly, the university is in the process of evaluating its academic policies to determine if they are placing unnecessary obstacles in a student's path to success, obstacles that might be more acutely felt among first generation, Pell-eligible, and URM students (CFR 4.2,1.4,1.6). For instance, we found that the process of course registration, listed prerequisite and articulation agreements, and the faculty drop policy causes unnecessary student stress and may be fostering unintended but inequitable treatment for some students and thus those policies are currently being reevaluated (CFR 1.6, 1.4). As noted, we changed from a prepay to a post pay campus to enable students with limited resources to register for classes in a timely manner. We changed the name of our "Student Disability Office" to the "Student Ability Success Center" to destigmatize disability support and foster a more inclusive environment. We retooled our admissions criteria to remove emphasis on standardized examinations. The university is evaluating its absence policy to ensure it does not place an undue burden on religious minorities. As the university continues to examine all aspects of its operations, we do so with an understanding that long-standing practices may need to be adjusted to equally support the success of our entire community.

Our commitment to DEI extends to increasing access to education. The changes in our admissions policy are geared towards increasing opportunity for first generation, URM, and Pell-eligible students. As noted, SDSU provides a degree completion program to currently incarcerated individuals through Second Chance Pell (CFR 2.13). California has pledged \$80 million dollar to build a new stem building for the Imperial Valley campus and SDSU responded by expanding stem degrees to the valley and hiring new faculty for that campus. SDSU Georgia helps students receive a STEM education and we intend on extending our commitment to that nation. Our unique location on the border provides many SDSU researchers the opportunity to study cross-border issues, to hold classes in Mexican universities, promote study abroad and internship opportunities in Mexico, and hold an annual "Re-border" conference uniting scholars studying border issues. The SDSU Oaxaca Center for Mesoamerican Studies (OCMS) was opened in May 2022 to advance SDSU's focus on collaborative and engaged Indigenous culture and language research in Latin America and among Latin American populations in the US. Oaxaca is home to the largest and most diverse population of Indigenous people in Mexico with 16 discrete language families and more than 200 variants of these languages. SDSU is the *only US university* in Oaxaca.

During our TPR, SDSU expects to demonstrate the university's deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all our faculty, students, staff, alumni, and community members. We expect to provide data-driven analysis (student use metrics, campus representation ratios, and funding analysis of the IV and Global Campus) in support of our DEI measures. We also expect to use the data to find opportunities for continuous improvement. For instance, while our percentage of minority faculty, students, and staff has improved, it is not yet reflective of the region and thus SDSU will continue to refine hiring and recruitment practices. DEI plans for campus units are not yet implemented or fully implemented and doing so is a high priority for the institution. Reevaluation of academic policies and space allocations continue. Promoting, supporting, and expanding DEI efforts is an on-going campus priority. We expect to not only demonstrate a deep commitment to DEI, but also a sustained and data-driven effort to continue to improve DEI. We look forward to using the reaffirmation process to facilitate deeper campus conversations around these goals.

### ***Timeline for each theme***

Both themes are central to the core functions of the university and involve continuous activities without "end dates". Nevertheless, action items as described in SDSU's strategic plan (located in Appendix A) are slated to be completed by 2025.

Specifically, the university has been committed to students' academic success since its founding. However, the pandemic as well as recent racial incidents nationally have led to an increased focus on student well-being and sense of belonging. We anticipate that our student services will grow and evolve as more needs become apparent. SDSU has undertaken a concerted effort to evaluate student needs through surveys, outreach, and advising and will continue to do so post reaffirmation review. The same applies to our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. SDSU will continue to engage in efforts to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to all our activities. While specific goals of the strategic plan are scheduled to be completed by 2025 and some may be sunset at that point, the overall commitment to DEI remains and will remain post reaffirmation review. The reaffirmation process provides a key opportunity for SDSU to center these two priorities.

### ***Resources***

The university has already committed significant resources to supporting student success and DEI as demonstrated by the current efforts notes earlier. Regarding student success, the university hired 20 new academic advisors, expanded our emergency services for students, added more mental health counselors, developed new student study space in the library, and increased access to education through Imperial Valley and Global Campus. SDSU has invested heavily in Students Affairs and Campus Diversity by creating positions to evaluate the success of co-curricular activities and to help student wellbeing. The University increased funding to support community engagement, service learning, and global learning.

However, opportunities for continuous improvement are evident and SDSU is committed to furthering student success. We are currently constructing student success action plans specific to each college, upgrading IT systems to support better distribution of financial aid, and assessing our degree and institutional learning outcomes. The university hopes to see an increase in state allocation for enrollment growth.

The University has also already made a significant financial commitment to DEI efforts. As noted, since its last reaffirmation, SDSU created a Chief Diversity Officer, a Center for Inclusive Excellence, added DEI criteria to all faculty searches, created and staffed cluster hires, and added an Ethnic Studies class graduation requirement. We continue to commit resources to promote and support DEI. The University hopes to continue to increase its representation of minorities in faculty, staff, and student numbers, is increasing programming at the Imperial Valley campus, and revamping all policies to change those that might cause unintentional barriers for students, especially first generation, Pell eligible, and URM students. As our assessment measures provide data on where improvements are needed, the university is committed to resourcing those improvements.

## **Appendix A: From SDSU's Strategic Plan:**

### ***1. Students at Our Core***

GOAL 1: Ensure that all members of the campus community are prepared to advance student success by deepening the quality of learning and closing equity gaps.

- Providing all faculty and advisors with information on student success and equity gaps in their classrooms and their respective colleges to drive improved student support.
- Identifying solutions for campuswide technological and professional development support for a coordinated campus approach to advising, teaching, and co-curricular support services.
- Developing plans for all academic programs to be actively engaged in equity-driven, evidence-based continuous improvement efforts. SDSU will ensure that all academic programs are actively engaged in equity-driven, evidence-based continuous improvement efforts that reflect best practices of assessment.
- Improving the university's placement rate for undergraduates in internships, research opportunities, and fellowships.
- Ensuring that all graduate programs will develop a professional development plan for graduate students.

GOAL 2: Expand access to affordable, high-quality university undergraduate and graduate education for the people of our region and beyond.

- Developing an infrastructure to sustain regional partnerships with K-12 schools, colleges and industry to promote college readiness and a college-going culture.
- Increasing the number of SDSU Global Campus adult learners by 25% in five years.

GOAL 3: To support student success and well-being both inside and outside the classroom, SDSU will strategically increase its programming, resources and capacity to provide mental health, wellness and basic needs support for all undergraduate and graduate students.

- Implement a wellness toolkit for faculty and staff to further promote and educate about counseling and economic crisis support.
- Developing a service delivery model that expands placement of its therapists in university programs, departments and centers.
- Creating plans to open a new multidisciplinary space to house and support campus basic needs initiatives.

### ***2. Equity and Inclusion in Everything We Do***

GOAL 1: Ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives across campus are aligned and implemented consistently, effectively and efficiently.

- Establishing a sustainable centrally-funded information technology unit.
- Ensuring that every major campus unit has a standing diversity council to better coordinate and promote unit-specific diversity, equity and inclusion activities.
- Developing a structured, university wide calendar to promote and highlight diversity-related programs and events.
- Expand the role of the Diversity Liaisons to better coordinate diversity, equity and inclusion activities across colleges and units.
- Developing a task force and applying for Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) status.

GOAL 2: Foster and sustain an environment where all students, faculty, staff, and alumni feel welcomed, supported, and valued by the university.

- Establishing a process and organized structure to coordinate, expand, and increase visibility of heritage month programs and events.
- Developing a protocol for continuous review and development of campus materials, events and programs to ensure diverse backgrounds, identities, and experiences are reflected with respect and authenticity.
- Engaging Arts Alive SDSU to display permanent outdoor representations of diverse communities.
- Establish a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative to drive action.
- Establishing and launching intergroup dialogue programs.
- Implementing an on-boarding program that emphasizes SDSU's values and educates all newly hired employees and new students about implicit bias, inclusive communication, designation and identity as an Hispanic-Serving Institution, and connection with the Kumeyaay people.

GOAL 3: Recruit, retain and advance graduate students, faculty and staff who can and will effectively support the diverse student body and communities served by SDSU.

- Ensuring participation in professional learning on inclusive practices for all committees responsible for admissions and also search, retention, tenure and promotion of employees.
- Establishing and providing institutional support for structured mentoring programs for all faculty and staff.
- Establishing and providing institutional support for structured leadership development opportunities for all faculty and staff.