SAN FRANCISCO BAY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL
REPORT

FOR REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

2025-2026

Report due date: July 10, 2025

Offsite review: September 18, 2025

Site visit: April 22-24, 2026

Table of Contents

Student Complaints Review Form
Transfer Credit Review Form

Appendix III: Institutional Exhibits

List of Figures and Tables

Section A – Institutional Context and Response to Previous Commission Actions

Description of the Institution

San Francisco Bay University (SFBU) is an institution undergoing purposeful reinvention. Since its founding in 1984 (as Northwestern Polytechnic University) in Fremont, California, SFBU has served a diverse and largely international student body through affordable, industry-aligned programs in computer science, engineering, and business. From 1984 through 1998, the university offered career-focused degree programs as an unaccredited institution and experienced modest enrollment growth (from tens of students to around 200 per trimester). Nearly all students at that time were local working professionals seeking to advance their careers with additional education.

In 1999, NPU became accredited with the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS). In 2020, the institution earned initial accreditation from WSCUC and in 2022 adopted a new name – San Francisco Bay University (SFBU) – signaling a fresh vision and a transformative approach to higher education. SFBU has developed an institutional identity connected to the innovative technology and business opportunities available in the San Francisco Bay Area, with curricular focus on business and computer science programs that prepare students to enter the workforce and bring their entrepreneurial aspirations into the competitive market. The focus on experiential and applied curricular experiences for students from diverse backgrounds and origins continues to drive the institution today.

Following ACICS accreditation in 1999, the institution's student body shifted toward international students, initially from China and Taiwan, and later from India. From 1999 to 2013, an average of 650 students attended NPU each term. From 2013 through 2016, NPU dramatically increased international student enrollment to a high of 6,114 students in the fall of 2015. This enrollment growth, though, was not sustained. Changes in accreditation starting in 2016 and the onset of the COVID-19

pandemic in 2020 drastically impacted the number of students on campus and serves as an important backdrop for the institutional changes made in the last decade.
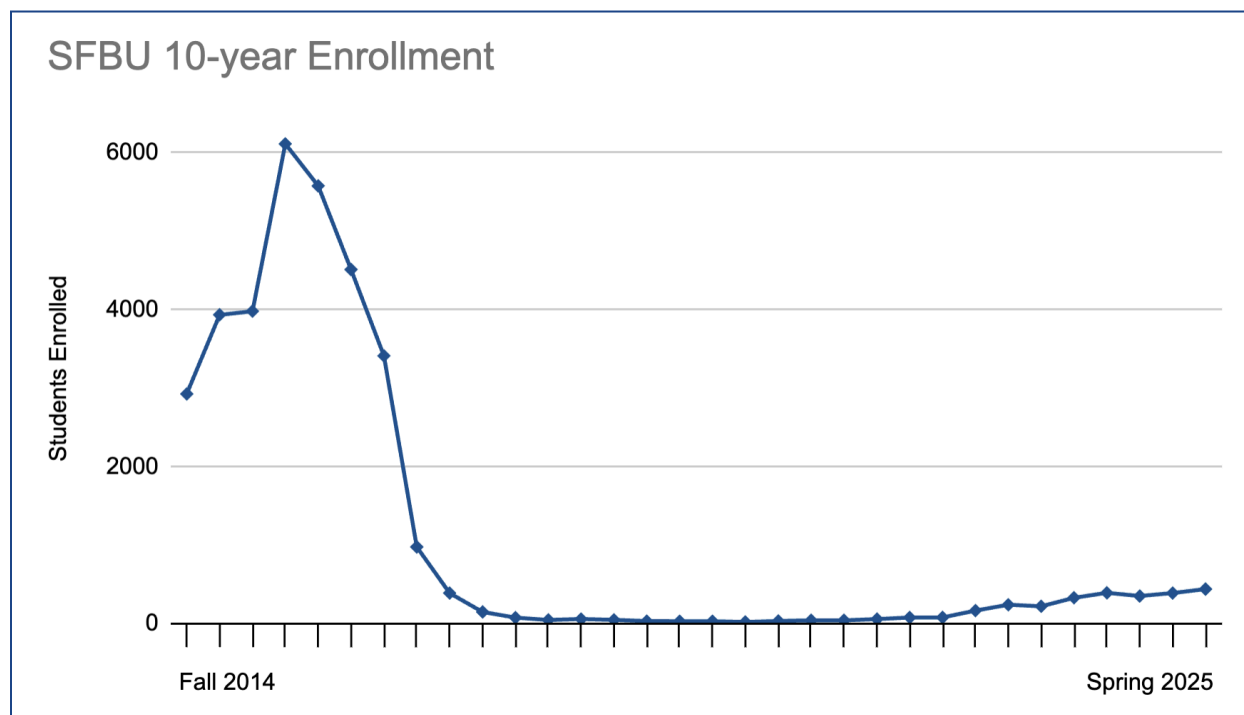
Figure 1: NPU/SFBU 10-year enrollment overview, Fall 2014-Spring 2025

In 2016, NPU obtained direct approval to operate from the state of California by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE). Also in 2016, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) withdrew recognition of ACICS as an accrediting agency, a decision subsequently overturned in March 2018, leading to the Secretary of Education fully reinstating the agency retroactive to Dec. 12, 2016.

The federal decision to revoke recognition of ACICS and following legal battle contributed to turbulence in NPU's enrollment following a peak in fall 2015, with 148 students enrolled in the fall of 2017 and 30 in the fall of 2019. Despite these setbacks and the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic in spring 2020, NPU faculty and staff worked diligently to support students, transition to online instruction due to COVID-19, and pursue accreditation with WSCUC. The initial accreditation process with WSCUC commenced in August 2017, Candidacy was granted in 2019 after the first Seeking

Accreditation Visit (SAV1), and Initial Accreditation granted for a period of six years in 2020 following the institution's SAV2.

In 2022, the university changed its name to San Francisco Bay University (SFBU) and began a period of comprehensive institutional transformation. SFBU's [Board of Directors](#) now has eight members who bring a wealth and breadth of experience to responsibly govern the institution. In June 2023, SFBU welcomed its fourth President, Dr. Nicholas Ladany, who established a more comprehensive senior leadership team. A three-year strategic plan was developed alongside a refined mission statement, institutional vision, and core values. Newly renovated facilities were opened to students at 161 Mission Falls Lane following the change of main campus in 2021. For greater alignment with the refined mission, vision, and core values, full- and part-time faculty were invited to reapply for their positions. Additionally, to deliver on the three-year strategic plan, SFBU launched an aggressive hiring campaign to fully staff existing offices and grow new academic and administrative departments.

Throughout these changes, the SFBU community has remained resilient. Faculty, staff, and students continue to be driven by the rapidly evolving technological industry of the Bay Area. On campus, SFBU students are met with a radically welcoming, multicultural, and multilingual environment with faculty and staff who work diligently to reduce barriers so all students can thrive. The singular constant throughout SFBU's 40-year history is the commitment to the mission of the institution. The student experience and degree programs reflect the value of the uniquely global experiences of our students, faculty, and staff and use that diversity to inspire students to imagine innovative solutions to problems faced by communities in the Bay Area and around the world. As evidenced by our Spring 2025 capstone exposition, SFBU students are interested in topics that range from AI-powered monitoring systems for ICU patients to matchmaking services, home and business improvements using AI, education solutions for learners with diverse needs, and launching their own small businesses and start-ups. An SFBU education allows students to pursue what matters most to them while gaining critical, technical, and interpersonal skills that prepare graduates to lead in competitive industries.

The holistic redesign of SFBU in recent years provides the unique opportunity to design its teaching philosophy from the ground up. Rather than following traditional models, SFBU is committed to pioneering a student-centered approach to learning that goes beyond the classroom to cultivate lifelong skills, critical thinking, and global adaptability. The six pillars of the SFBU student experience – developed as part of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan – represent a shared commitment to nurturing well-rounded learners who are empowered to lead with purpose, adapt to global challenges, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. These pillars reflect the institutional values of inclusivity, innovation, and interconnectedness and are designed to ensure that every student's journey at SFBU is one of discovery, growth, and success. Through these pillars, the institution aims to support not only
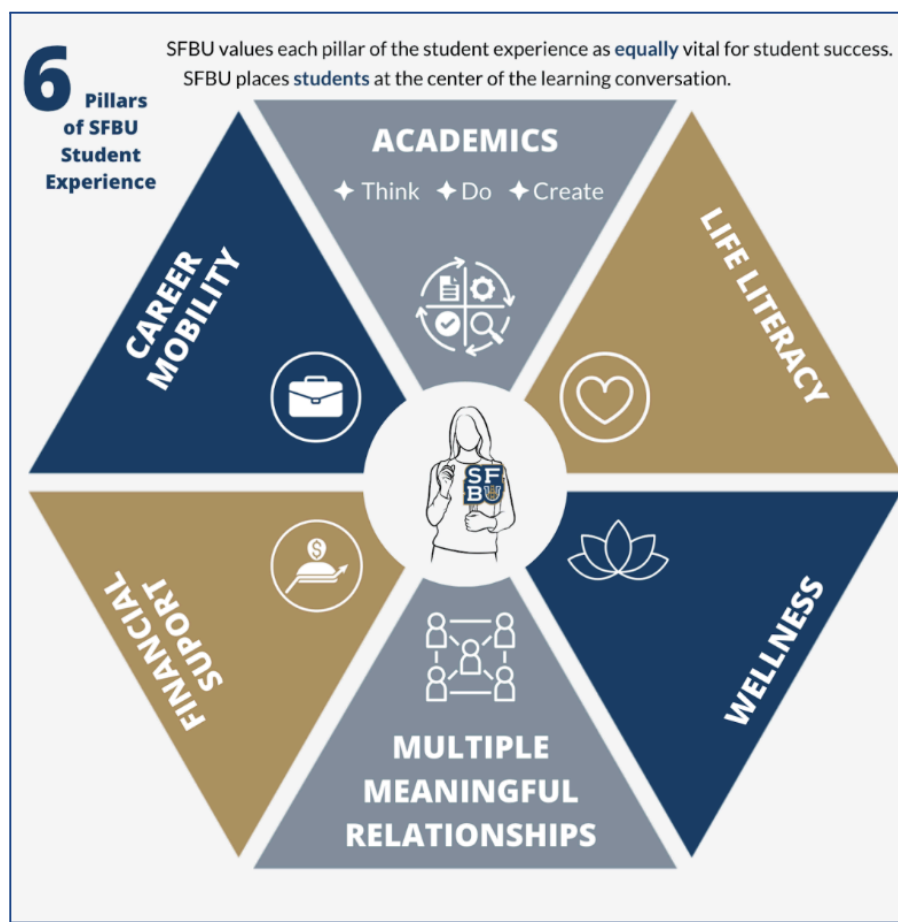
Figure 2: The six pillars of the SFBU student experience

academic excellence but also the development of essential life skills, cultural competence, and resilience, creating an environment where students thrive.

Student experience is designed around six foundational pillars, each designed to support students holistically and prepare them for personal and professional success. These pillars are integrated across all aspects of the university, ensuring a cohesive and supportive environment and providing the structural coherence for learning and teaching and our organizational identity. Each of the Pillars operate as described:

Academics

SFBU's academic programs are built upon the [Agility Praxis Pathway (APP)](#), a transdisciplinary core curriculum developed in collaboration with industry leaders and standards of performance established by industry. This curriculum emphasizes practical skills, critical thinking, and adaptability, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the workforce. Faculty members receive training in innovative teaching methods to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes from the Center for Empowerment and Pedagogical Innovation (CEPI).

Life Literacy

Recognizing that success extends beyond academic knowledge, SFBU prioritizes life literacy by equipping students with essential life skills. Undergraduate general education courses such as "How to Tell Your Story" and "How to Design Your Personal and Professional Life" guide students in self-reflection, goal setting, and effective communication. Graduate students benefit from hands-on, experiential learning guided by industry standards and partnerships.

Wellness

SFBU adopts a holistic approach to student wellness, addressing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Services include unlimited access to licensed, in-house counseling, wellness workshops, and 24/7 virtual health support through platforms like TimelyCare. By fostering a culture of self-care and resilience, the university aims to support students' overall well-being throughout their academic journey.

Multiple Meaningful Relationships

The university emphasizes the importance of building a supportive network of relationships. Through small class sizes capped at 20 students, mentorship programs, and community engagement initiatives, students are encouraged to form meaningful connections with peers, faculty, and industry professionals. This network serves as a foundation for personal growth and professional development.

Financial Support

Understanding the financial challenges many students face, SFBU offers comprehensive financial support, including scholarships and aid packages. The university also integrates financial literacy into its curriculum, teaching students practical skills like budgeting, understanding credit, and planning for long-term financial stability. For aspiring entrepreneurs, SFBU provides resources and seed funding opportunities to support student-led ventures.

Career Mobility

SFBU is committed to enhancing students' career prospects by aligning academic programs with industry needs. The university collaborates with Silicon Valley partners to identify in-demand competencies and incorporates them into the curriculum. Students benefit from career services, internships, and networking opportunities that facilitate a seamless transition from education to employment.

Collectively, these six pillars reflect SFBU's dedication to providing an inclusive, innovative, and student-centered educational experience that prepares graduates for the complexities of modern life and work.

SFBU Students

In Spring 2025, SFBU enrolled a total of 439 students, with 271 graduate and 168 undergraduate students. The majority of SFBU students are full-time, in-person, and international. Of SFBU's 271

graduate students, 54% are enrolled in the Master of Science in Computer Science program and 42% are enrolled in the Master of Business Administration. SFBU's M.S. programs in Business Analytics, Data Science, and Electrical Engineering represent 4% of graduate student enrollment.

Of SFBU's 168 undergraduate students, 67% are enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and 33% are enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program. Additional student characteristics are included in the table below.

	Undergraduate (168 Students)	Graduate (271 Students)
International	82%	86%
Domestic	18%	14%
Male	63%	45%
Female	36%	55%
Full-time Student	100%	95%
Transfer Student	22%	6%
Received SFBU Scholarship in 2024-2025	97%	86%
Identify as Asian	65%	60%
Identify as Black/African American	3%	21%
Identify as Hispanic	3%	1%
Identify as White	1%	3%
Identify as Hawaiian	1%	-
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	27%	15%

Table 1: Graduate and undergraduate identities

SFBU is proud to welcome students from 44 individual countries at the time this report was written. Multiculturalism and the celebration of diversity is a lived experience on our campus. Both international and domestic student populations are multilingual and multinational, further emphasizing the unique range of racial and ethnic communities in the Bay Area.

Process to Prepare the Institutional Report

The process to prepare the institutional report officially began in the spring of 2024. With a national search for SFBU's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) in progress, the institution hired an external consultant with extensive experience with WSCUC accreditation to begin the self-study process. Dr. Michele Starkey joined SFBU in May 2024 as an external consultant with the charge of compiling a steering committee and organizing the self-study process. The SFBU Reaffirmation of Accreditation Steering Committee met for the first time on June 28, 2024, to discuss WSCUC's reaffirmation of accreditation process and deliverables.

In August 2024, SFBU hired a full-time Director of Accreditation and Assessment and ALO, Ella Frazer. SFBU's new ALO worked closely with Dr. Starkey to transition leadership of the reaffirmation process. Dr. Starkey was an invaluable resource to this institution in beginning its first reaffirmation of accreditation with WSCUC and truly paved the way for an efficient and meaningful reflection on SFBU's mission, the student experience, and areas for improvement. Additionally, SFBU's first reaffirmation coincided with the launch of WSCUC's updated 2023 standards and a new format for the institutional report.

By the start of the Fall 2024 semester, the steering committee had already started drafting the self-study. Using the Compliance with WSCUC Standards Worksheet (Appendix I of this report) as a general guide, SFBU organized their self-study inquiry around the four standards and related criteria. In addition, steering committee members were tasked with researching and writing the initial drafts of each institutional essay overseen by the ALO. Completing and institutional self-study during this period of institutional transformation was not a simple task. As SFBU welcomed new leadership, staff, and faculty, our inquiries evolved, new steering committee members were trained on accreditation and updated on progress, and gaps between standing practices at SFBU and the WSCUC standards were identified and addressed.

The benefit of this approach is that we now have a community of faculty, staff, and students who have been immersed in the standards of accreditation while core functions of the institution were being built. Not only has this increased fidelity with the standards across units, but also given SFBU the opportunity to build an institutional practice of reflection, collaboration, and improvement that centers students and empowers faculty and staff to pursue enhancements to the student experience. One example of this commitment to critical and collaborative reflection is SFBU's practice of hosting "postmortem" meetings after the initial weeks of each academic semester, a practice initiated by SFBU's Provost in 2024. When students arrive on campus, SFBU faculty and staff track questions, issues, and inefficiencies that come up during New Student Orientation and the first weeks of each semester in a shared document. Then, in the postmortem meeting, staff and faculty gather from across the institution to discuss each row of that spreadsheet. This allows staff to identify pressing issues and ineffective procedures, collaborate on sustainable solutions to the student experience, and create a plan for improvement with relevant leadership.

By the end of Fall 2024, steering committee members had provided first drafts of the four institutional essays for this report and gathered the majority of information included in the compliance worksheet. Areas of misalignment with the standards were identified and addressed, with many initiatives still in progress as detailed later in this report. As new policies, processes, and initiatives have developed over the past year, the institutional report has been updated to reflect the various improvements and changes made.

With the information gathered by steering committee members and colleagues, the ALO completed a review of the products generated by the self study and provided a rough draft of the institutional report to the steering committee in early February 2025. Steering committee members met on March 4, 2025 to discuss the direction of the institutional report and shape the narrative. A completed second draft was provided to the steering committee and SFBU leadership on Friday, April 25, 2025. Following edits and corrections to the report, and with the approval of the President, the ALO then supplied the institutional report to the SFBU Board of Directors for review and discussion during their

quarterly meeting on May 16-17, 2025. Following the review and approval of the report by the Board of Directors, a public webpage was created for the larger SFBU community to review the institutional report narrative and provide feedback. Comments were collected from faculty, staff, and students, and the draft was shared with industry partners and alumni.

Response to Previous Commission Requirements

The university began the Seeking Accreditation process with WSCUC in 2017. The Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 (SAV1) occurred in fall 2018, and in March 2019 the Commission granted Candidacy and scheduled a second SAV in fall 2020. Following the SAV2, the Commission granted initial accreditation for a period of six years on July 8, 2020. SFBU also provided an interim report to WSCUC in fall 2022, responding to the six issues articulated below. A 2025 update to each of the six issues is included.

1. Continue maturing its governing Board so that the Board may fulfill its designated role in guiding the institution. The Board should ensure that it is involved in reviewing and approving all of the university's strategic and operational plans; that it determines an appropriate governance relationship between itself and the newly-established Faculty Assembly; that it brings to bear appropriate external resources to help in further Board development and enhancement; that it structures and implements a formal process of systematic self-evaluation; and that it institutes a process to refresh Board membership, such as establishing a provision for term limits [2013 CFR 3.9].

> The Board of Directors now has eight members who bring extensive experience in education, business, and technology. Our Board has [six committees](#) related to audits, finance and investments, academic affairs, executive compensation and housing, strategic priorities, and governance. Members take an active role in the review and approval of institutional plans, as evidenced by the [meeting minutes](#) in Appendix I. The Board has continued to follow guidelines on self evaluation published by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) since the training session hosted by Dr. Ellen Chaffee in 2022, as reflected in our most recent interim report. A detailed description of SFBU's Board of Directors is included below in the Section B, Standard 3 essay.

2. Reform and reconfigure the Faculty Assembly committee structures to maximize efficiency and streamline committee participation [2013 CFR 3.10].

> The SFBU Faculty Assembly was originally formed in 2019 and recently restructured in the fall of 2024 as part of a larger reshaping of Academic Affairs. All SFBU faculty were hired or rehired under new contracts from 2024 onwards. The reconfiguration of Academic Affairs and reorganization of the faculty required a new structure for the Faculty Assembly, which builds upon work done by predecessors to invest in a functioning and reliable shared governance structure after SFBU received this recommendation from the Commission in 2020. In Fall 2024, the Faculty Handbook, By-Laws, and Faculty Assembly structure were examined and a revised structure for the Faculty Assembly was created. In January 2025, the Faculty Assembly was re-launched and governing documents approved. More information on the Faculty Assembly and shared governance is included in the description of the institution above, as well as Section B, Standard 3 of this report.

3. Utilize the institution's formal academic processes more intentionally to support the faculty's demonstrated leadership in the development of flexible and innovative courses and programs that respond to the needs of a changing workforce and student population and that sustain and enhance a quality curriculum that is reflective of the character of NPU [2013 CFR 3.10].

> The recent restructuring within SFBU aims to accomplish this recommendation. Full-time faculty sign 12-month contracts and are on campus throughout the calendar year, as is expected of staff. SFBU faculty prioritize teaching and student-centered service to the institution, meaning they spend less time in traditional governance structures and more time supporting part-time faculty, planning field trips, connecting with industry professionals, and reviewing and updating degree curricula. Again, Section B, Standard 3 of this report continues this discussion of faculty governance and leadership.

4. Vigorously pursue marketing and enrollment strategies that complement the institution's ambitious enrollment projections and clearly reflect and implement a well-defined branding of the institution's mission and vision. Achieving appropriate levels of course and program enrollments will support the institution's educational model of project-based learning and student-to-student collaboration and interaction [2013 CFR 4.6].

> SFBU is incredibly proud of the efforts of our marketing and admissions teams to launch a branding and marketing program and increase enrollments in all programs in-line with SFBU's budget projections. SFBU has initiated local advertising campaigns for the first time in the history of the institution, featuring digital and physical advertisements, including a partnership with our local transit agency in Fremont. We have launched a completely redesigned website, increased staffing in enrollment management and student support services, and are utilizing emerging technologies to track students from application through degree completion via Salesforce. These initiatives are discussed in greater detail in Section B, Standard 3.

5. Put in place a faculty staffing plan that is well articulated with the university's enrollment plan and brings a cadre of highly qualified, demographically and experientially diverse faculty with doctorates from a range of higher education institutions [2013 CFR 4.6].

> As mentioned above, all SFBU faculty were either hired or rehired under new contracts beginning in 2024. All full-time faculty at SFBU hold a doctoral degree. Details on SFBU's new faculty body are included in Section B, Standard 3. A faculty staffing plan has been developed, driven by enrollment and based on SFBU's target (established in 2023) of keeping course sections at or below 20 students. This is further described in Section B, Standard 3.

6. Develop and implement a comprehensive program of academic support and financial resources to attract and retain domestic students [2013 CFR 4.6].

The recruitment and retention of domestic students is a key component of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. SFBU has not been approved for Title IV federal financial aid at this time; the institution has submitted an application in April 2024 and is awaiting approval from the department of Federal Student Aid, ideally for eligibility starting Fall 2027. Although SFBU offers an affordable tuition model and seeks to diminish the total cost of attendance (by instituting a no-cost textbook policy in Fall 2025, for example), we recognize that the cost of higher education is still too high for many prospective students. For this reason, SFBU offers a significant institutional discount. In Spring 2025, 97% of undergraduate students and 87% of graduate students received some sort of institutional scholarship. Of those students, undergraduate students had an average of 81% of their tuition covered, and graduate students benefited from an average of 78% of their tuition covered by institutional scholarships. Immigration status is not a barrier to SFBU scholarships and all students, regardless of nationality, are considered for the same pool of financial support. SFBU hopes to be permitted to offer federal student aid for domestic students starting in Fall 2027.

In addition to financial support, SFBU has launched the Startup Scholars program aimed at recruiting first-generation, domestic students who think big, take risks, and seek to create a lasting, transformative project launched during their time at SFBU. SFBU has also taken steps to revitalize academic advising and wraparound support services led by our newly formed Student Affairs unit. Students have access to unlimited mental health services, tutoring, student life services, and more. Additional information on the Startup Scholars program and academic support structures are included in Section B, Standard 2

Other Topics

Following initial accreditation in 2020, SFBU has launched an online Graduate Certificate in Business Management (GCM) in 2022, an in-person Master of Science in Data Science (MSDS) in 2024, an in-person Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBAn) in 2024, and an online Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BSCS) in 2025. Responses to recommendations from the Commission are included below, with a summary of recommendations from distance education applications since 2020.

SFBU is currently undergoing a substantive change review of four reduced-credit undergraduate degrees in online and in-person modalities in Computer Science and Business Administration. The initial panel review of these 90-credit programs was held on May 29, 2025. Following that session, SFBU was asked to revise and resubmit the proposed programs after addressing some issues identified by the Substantive Change panel. An update on that initiative is included in this section.

Master of Science in Data Science (MSDS) – New Program (September 2023)

1. The institution will need to provide evidence of how the assessment plan informs program change or improvement, both from learning outcomes assessment and program review. (CFR 2.6, 4.7)

> Academic Assessment of the MSDS program has been challenging due to the low sample size of student work and continued low enrollment in the program. The MSDS program launched in Fall 2024 and is pending Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) approval, which has led to the inability to accept international students into the program. SFBU's current focus is growing MSDS enrollment and implementing assessment practices in line with this growth. See Section B, Standard 2 for additional information on SFBU's academic assessment practice.

Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBAn) – New Program (September 2023)

1. Academic Administration should complete its current plan to hire full-time faculty for the proposed program as soon as possible in Year One of the new program to add coherence and focused strategic attention to the program in totality. (CFRs 3.1, 3.6, 3.10)

> SFBU recruited Dr. Johnathan Mun as a full-time Professor in the School of Business. Dr. Mun brings a wealth of experience from his previous role at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, with a research portfolio primarily focused on Integrated Risk Management. His extensive work in this field, along with multiple professional certifications, makes him a valuable resource for instruction and curriculum development in quantitative analysis at SFBU. Additionally, the university appointed Dr. Cassondra Smith, MBA, PMP, as a Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow in Business. Dr. Smith brings extensive industry expertise in fashion marketing and valuable teaching experience from her prior Adjunct Faculty role at Berkeley College, enhancing SFBU's academic offerings, while continuing to draw from a pool of highly qualified part-time faculty with significant industry experience. SFBU is actively recruiting an additional full-time faculty member for the Business programs.

2. Library staff should design a more structured, assertive approach to student support particularly for graduate level programs and include assessment protocols of the adequacy of that support. (CFRs 2.13, 3.5)

> SFBU currently has one part-time staff librarian. As enrollments grow, the librarian position will convert to full-time. Our librarian has grown digital and physical resources for SFBU students, including establishing an inter-library loan program, revising and expanding digital resources for students, and hosting numerous training sessions for students during orientation and in classes.

3. Administration must be ready to provide evidence of co-curricular assessment for all service areas of the University. (CFR 2.11)

> SFBU's significant restructuring in 2024-2025 has led the institution in new directions with regard to the assessment of co-curricular service areas of the university. The co-curricular assessment model has been redeveloped according to SFBU's six pillars of the student experience: academics, life literacy, wellness, multiple meaningful relationships. financial support, and career readiness. For the first time in the history of the institution, SFBU has established robust student services including residential life, wellness and mental health, student services, academic advising, and more. These efforts, including an overview of our assessment design, are discussed in Section B, Standard 2.

4. Program faculty should consider an assessment protocol demonstrating how the optional practicum offering supports or enhances the proposed program. (CFRs 2.10, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5)

> Currently, students enrolled in the CPT course complete an exit interview with the course instructor and submit a final report on their experience. The employer is also surveyed by the institution. Program faculty are considering ways to utilize student and employer reflections and feedback in their programmatic assessment practice.

5. Future substantive change proposals should include additional clarity regarding the institution's unique perspective and distinction between "grading" and "assessment," how those activities are implemented, and why they are considered as separate faculty activities. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.4, 4.7)

> SFBU will take care to address this in future Substantive Change proposals.

Distance Education - multiple New Program proposals (2020-2025)

> SFBU has also submitted substantive changes aimed at establishing Distance Education programming. We have received approval to offer distance education in the Master of Business

Administration in 2020, the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 2021, the Master of Science in Computer Science in 2022, and the Bachelor of Computer Science in 2025. Comments from the WSCUC Substantive Change Committee are summarized below.

- Ensure students completing online courses have access to university resources in a timely manner.
  - SFBU implemented the Student Success Hub to ensure students complete online courses and have access to university resources in a timely manner. Faculty and staff also play a central role in supporting student progression and require regular meetings each term.
- Disseminating findings from the assessment of student learning processes to faculty, staff, and students.
  - SFBU's Institutional Research team presents aggregate findings from academic assessments of student learnings to administration using PowerBI dashboards for faculty and staff on a semesterly basis. The findings are based on faculty evaluations of signature assignments using Canvas. The PowerBI dashboards allow community members across campus to engage with IR for questions and to disaggregate the results by program, student population, cohort, and student demographics. SFBU recently transitioned from LiveText to Canvas in Fall 2024 to streamline assessment scoring. SFBU is also in the process of launching Salesforce as our primary SIS, which will allow the institution to utilize Qualtrics and Tableau to gather and share data on student learning outcomes throughout the semester.
- Appropriately scaling student support resources alongside enrollment growth from online offerings.
  - SFBU has scaled student support resources alongside enrollment growth within our existing online program and in preparation for the online BSCS, which was approved in

Spring 2025. The SFBU Student Success Hub provides students with a central location for all student services, both onsite and online, and SFBU staff are available for high touch advising and support services. SFBU has also partnered with AlmaAI as a course development and student support tool. AlmaAI is available to all SFBU faculty for course design and planning. Students can utilize AlmaAI in their courses for assistance with specific assignments or as a Teaching Assistant. One major benefit of this technology is the ability to pinpoint potential learning gaps or areas for improvement while students are still in the course, which allows faculty and students to bring in support resources before final grades are due.

● Miscellaneous tips on writing proposals for the Substantive Change Committee, including clarifying student headcount and faculty FTE, etc.

○ These recommendations have been incorporated into our proposals and reports.

● Paying special attention to the percentage of adjunct faculty and ensuring consistency with instruction and student support.

○ SFBU has implemented budget projections that scale full-time and adjunct faculty alongside enrollment growth.

Reduced Credit Baccalaureate Programs - Structural Change (May 2025)

- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (onsite and online)
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (onsite and online)

SFBU submitted four proposals to the WSCUC Substantive Change Committee in early 2025 aimed at establishing 90-credit (3-year) versions of our existing undergraduate programs in Business Administration and Computer Science. A panel review was held on May 29, 2025 and, following this review, the panel found that "some areas of the proposal were lacking information regarding new and changing initiatives directly related to the new degree programs." SFBU was invited to revise and resubmit the reduced-credit proposals and address the following information. SFBU has not yet finalized

our response to these questions and plans to provide the external review team with additional information in advance of the offsite review. The seven areas of inquiry from the review panel are provided here.

1. Describe the new assessment plan to be completed and implemented for the Reduced Credit/3-year BSBA/BSCS on-campus degrees and distance education degree options. Identify how that plan is different from the current assessment plan at SFBU. Include all steps in the assessment process including how student learning data is collected, how the data is recorded, who/how aggregates and disaggregates student learning data for analysis, when findings of student learning data are reported to faculty for discussion on program improvement. (CFRs 2.7, 2.9, 4.1, 4.2)

2. Provide a comprehensive description of the asynchronous modality of distance education to be newly implemented by SFBU for the proposed program. Provide a fully developed course in the Canvas Learning Management System from one of the proposed programs using the asynchronous modality and ready for distribution to students. Describe how the WSCUC requirements for distance education will be fulfilled in the asynchronous model. Also include descriptions for how faculty are trained for all requirements for distance education and how faculty courses are monitored for all distance education requirements. Provide a distance education course using the asynchronous modality fully developed in the Canvas Learning Management System. (CFR 2.1 & Substantive Change Manual)

3. Provide curriculum maps for both the 120-credit degree and the 90-credit degree showing how identical Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are introduced, developed, and mastered in both degree options. (CFRs 2.1, 2.3, 2.7)

4. Provide an explicit plan for marketing and advising/counseling information presented to potential students regarding the distinction between the degree options. (CFRs 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.12)

5. The institution should strongly consider the nomenclature and official transcripts of the degree options to ensure transparency and clarity for prospective students and employers. (CFRs 1.3, 1.7, 2.3)

6. Describe the process for designing and approving online courses using both instructional design expertise and best practice and incorporating CANVAS features. (CFR 2.1)

7. Provide the admission requirements for international and domestic students to both program options. (CFR 1.3)

Section B – Institutional Essays

Standard 1 – Defining Institutional Mission and Acting with Integrity

Institutional Purposes: Mission, Values, and Commitment to Student Success

SFBU is redefining higher education to meet the needs of our students and propel them into fulfilling roles that make a difference in the world. Through affordable tuition and extensive institutional financial support, collaborative learning, and strong student support services, SFBU tears down barriers to undergraduate and graduate degree completion.

The SFBU Mission: San Francisco Bay University provides diverse learners with inclusive, innovative and inspirational education for lifelong personal and professional success.

The SFBU Vision: San Francisco Bay University will set the standard as a national and international model of engaged and transformative higher education in service of the common good.

SFBU Bayhawk Core Values:

- Care for the whole student
- Deliver teaching excellence
- Provide access and inclusion
- Offer affordable Higher Education opportunities
- Reflect the vibrancy of the Silicon Valley

SFBU's mission, rooted in providing high-quality, affordable education, reflects its strong commitment to fostering the success of all students (CFRs 1.1, 1.2). This mission is underpinned by core values of equity, inclusion, and social responsibility that are attentive to the needs of learners from around the world. The university actively promotes a culture where every student, regardless of socio-economic background, race, gender, or nationality, can thrive academically and personally. This is demonstrated through numerous initiatives, such as the availability of scholarships, inclusive admissions policies and practices, and holistic student support services designed to ensure that marginalized or underserved populations have the tools they need to succeed (CFR 1.2).

SFBU's commitment to equity is not merely aspirational but operationalized in its day-to-day functions, ensuring that all students receive equitable opportunities for learning and personal growth. For example, the university emphasizes diversity in its revised core curriculum, promoting cross-cultural understanding and global competencies that are essential in today's interconnected world. SFBU also strives to address the varying needs of students by providing resources tailored to enhance academic performance through multiple meaningful relationships, including counseling, tutoring, mentorship, and career readiness programs. This focus on equity ensures that SFBU does not only admit a diverse student body but also supports these students throughout their academic journey, removing barriers to their success. (CFR 1.2)

Institutional Purposes: 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan reflects ambitious priorities and recognizes the potential for radical and innovative change at SFBU. Students remain at the center of everything we do. The priorities moving this institution forward over the next three years focus on building brand recognition while optimizing operational effectiveness to support growth. Additionally, SFBU will develop a holistic approach to serving and supporting all students as we launch an innovative and bold curriculum, including reduced credit undergraduate degrees and in content areas new to the institution.

SFBU is also working to cultivate relationships and partnerships of consequence in Silicon Valley and beyond to advance curricular goals and improve the student experience while also raising our profile in the region. These partnerships allow current students access to industry prior to graduation, evidenced by initiatives such as the IBM LinuxONE partnership for SFBU's graduate and undergraduate capstone courses, and also increase access for historically underserved prospective students to learn about higher education and college readiness, evidenced by relationships with Junior Achievement of Northern California, the Latino Education Advancement Foundation, College Track, local high schools, and more. Each of these priorities will help grow SFBU enrollment while moving toward a new era of higher education. As of April 2025, 98% of all initiatives are in process and 45% are completed.

Figure 3: SFBU's strategic priorities

The strategic plan articulates six priorities stemming from SFBU's mission, vision, and core values. Those priorities are brand recognition, operational effectiveness, student success, innovation, partnerships, and enrollment.

Integrity and Transparency in Decision-Making

SFBU's mission, vision, and values also support a participatory management model that values openness, consultation, and transparency. The university fosters a transparent approach to decision-making, ensuring that key community members – including students, faculty, and community members – are actively involved in institutional processes. This approach upholds the institution's commitment to integrity by providing multiple avenues for input and feedback, ensuring decisions are made collaboratively and in the best interest of the university and its students (CFRs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5).

SFBU ensures transparency by regularly communicating updates on institutional policies, strategic initiatives, and financial planning through open forums, a bi-weekly campus newsletter sent to students, faculty, and staff called the [Bayhawk Bulletin](#), and [news items posted to the SFBU website](#). This commitment to transparency extends to its academic policies, financial aid distribution, and the assessment of student learning outcomes, all of which are conducted in a manner that prioritizes fairness and accountability (CFRs 1.3, 1.7). All policies and procedures are available to faculty and staff via the internal Employee Resource Portal and employees receive email notifications when policies change or new information is uploaded. Students are able to access relevant institutional policies in the [Academic Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#). (CFRs 1.4, 1.5) The university's governance structure further promotes ethical leadership, ensuring that those in decision-making roles are held accountable for their actions through regular reviews and assessments, and that complaints and grievances are addressed quickly and responsibly via Human Resources (for faculty and staff), through the complaints inbox managed by SFBU's General Counsel (for students), or SFBU's Title IX Office (for faculty, staff, and students) (CFR 1.4).

This culture of integrity ensures that SFBU's institutional goals, rooted in promoting equity and student success, are implemented with clarity and fairness. By fostering a transparent and inclusive governance model, SFBU upholds its mission to serve its diverse student population while maintaining the highest standards of ethical responsibility. The SFBU Board of Directors meets quarterly, with

committees operating continuously throughout the year. SFBU operates on a semester schedule with two, 16-week semesters in the fall and spring and one, 8-week summer session. Full-time faculty members work continuously through the calendar year, as do staff. The Faculty Assembly meets at least once per semester and provides an opportunity for adjunct faculty to weigh in on decisions and seek leadership positions, such as participating in the reaffirmation of accreditation process. Faculty Assembly meetings are held in addition to routine department meetings in four academic departments: Business, Electrical and Computer Engineering, General Education, and Psychology. Staff and all faculty are also given opportunities to connect, reflect, and refine during regular retreats hosted each semester. (CFRs 1.5, 1.6)

A newly established leadership team brings national expertise to advance the mission, while continuous improvement efforts, including curriculum reform and expanded student support, demonstrate the university's deep commitment to transformative education and the success of all students (CFR 3.9). Guided by its mission, vision, and Bayhawk Core Values, SFBU integrates equity, access, and social responsibility into all aspects of its operations. Through transparent governance, a participatory leadership model, and strong institutional support services, SFBU fosters a culture of integrity and continuous improvement (CFR 1.8).

SFBU's mission, values, and institutional culture provide the foundation for a commitment to the success of all students. By aligning with WSCUC policies on equity and inclusion, the university fosters a learning environment where diversity is embraced, and every student is equipped to thrive (CFR 1.2). Furthermore, the institution's transparent, open, and consultative approach ensures that its operations remain grounded in integrity, ensuring that SFBU continues to uphold its mission while preparing students for global citizenship and academic excellence. While SFBU and many of our faculty and staff are relatively new to the policies and procedures set forth by our accreditor, we are appreciative of the approach to quality assurance and mission alignment and encouraged by opportunities to engage with WSCUC through the Accreditation Resource Conference, Accreditation Leadership Academy, volunteer positions, and public meetings (CFR 1.8). This essay sets the stage for the ongoing exploration of how SFBU integrates equity, inclusion, and transparency across its institutional practices.

Standard 2 – Achieving Educational Objectives and Student Success

Existing Degree Programs

San Francisco Bay University (SFBU) currently offers two undergraduate programs and five graduate programs aligned with our mission to provide inclusive, innovative, and inspirational education for lifelong personal and professional success. The university's degree programs are designed to equip students with the technical knowledge and practical skills required to excel in competitive markets and a rapidly changing world. SFBU offers business degrees including the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBAn), and a fully online Graduate Certificate in Management (GCM). Degree programs in electrical and computer engineering include the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BSCS), Master of Science in Computer Science (MSCS), Master of Science in Data Science (MSDS), and the Master of Science in Electrical Engineering (MSEE).

Starting in 2021, SFBU has been developing synchronous online versions of existing degree programs. The GCM is the singular online-only and non-degree program at SFBU. The MBA was approved for distance education in 2021, followed by the BSBA and MSCS programs in 2022. Finally, the BSCS program was recently approved by WSCUC for distance education in spring 2025. All existing online programs are currently delivered via synchronous online courses. In spring 2025, only 2% of courses at SFBU were online-only.

Each of these degree programs is designed with clear entry requirements, curriculum content, and expected learning outcomes that align with the institution's educational objectives, which can be viewed in the Academic Catalog (CFR 2.1). The MSCS program, for example, focuses on data science, software engineering, and machine learning, while the MSEE program provides students with advanced knowledge in embedded systems and the Internet of Things (IoT). These programs not only fulfill the university's mission but are also directly aligned with WSCUC's former core competencies as outlined in the

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), which include written and oral communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and specialized knowledge in the field of study.

By mapping PLOs to institutional goals and ensuring that students progress from introductory to mastery levels through the curriculum, SFBU ensures that its degree programs remain relevant to both the needs of students and industry standards (CFR 2.2). This structure promotes academic rigor while simultaneously providing students with real-world applications to the skills they are developing, ensuring that they are well-prepared to meet future career challenges. Various partnerships with local companies have been an asset to the SFBU curricula, providing real-world problems for students to solve and hands-on training with the most up-to-date technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR).

After welcoming a new provost in June 2024, SFBU either hired or interviewed and rehired all full- and part-time faculty starting in summer 2024. In addition, the institution transitioned from an administrative structure relying on Academic Deans in January 2025 and instead instituted full-time professors and department chairs in Business and Electrical and Computer Engineering. Additional information on these changes are included in the faculty section below. Due to this reconfiguration, many academic processes at SFBU are restarting, including annual assessment and academic program review (CFRs 2.3, 2.4), building upon progress made by the institution after initial accreditation in 2020. The program curricula, learning outcomes structure and evaluation, advising process, and student support mechanisms are all being reviewed and revamped in line with SFBU's new mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Initial data on student retention following modifications to the student experience in 2024-2025 is encouraging. Students appreciate that all courses at SFBU are capped at 20 students, which allows for meaningful relationships with faculty and individualized support and the hands-on learning experiences in the form of hack-a-thons, field trips, and new laboratories. From fall 2024 to spring 2025, SFBU retained 88% of its total undergraduate population, which includes international, domestic and returning students. Across graduate programs 92% of students were retained between fall and spring of the same year.

General Education Redesign: SFBU's Agility Praxis Pathway (APP)

In 2023-2024, SFBU embarked on a holistic redesign of the general education curriculum for undergraduate students in Business and Computer Science. Composed of ten courses (30 credits) taken by all SFBU undergraduate students, the Agility Praxis Pathway (APP) serves as the backbone of the institution's academic approach and reflects our commitment to a new paradigm of higher education. Infused with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and a commitment to all students at the center of the learning conversation, the APP model is a response to the evolving, multifaceted needs of students, employers, and the broader global challenges at hand. As such, this model is designed to foster agility to not only adaptively navigate but flourish amidst change, honor praxis - bridging the rich traditions of academic inquiry with the imperative of pragmatic creativity, and offer flexible, clear pathways to make progress toward goals and respond to new opportunities.
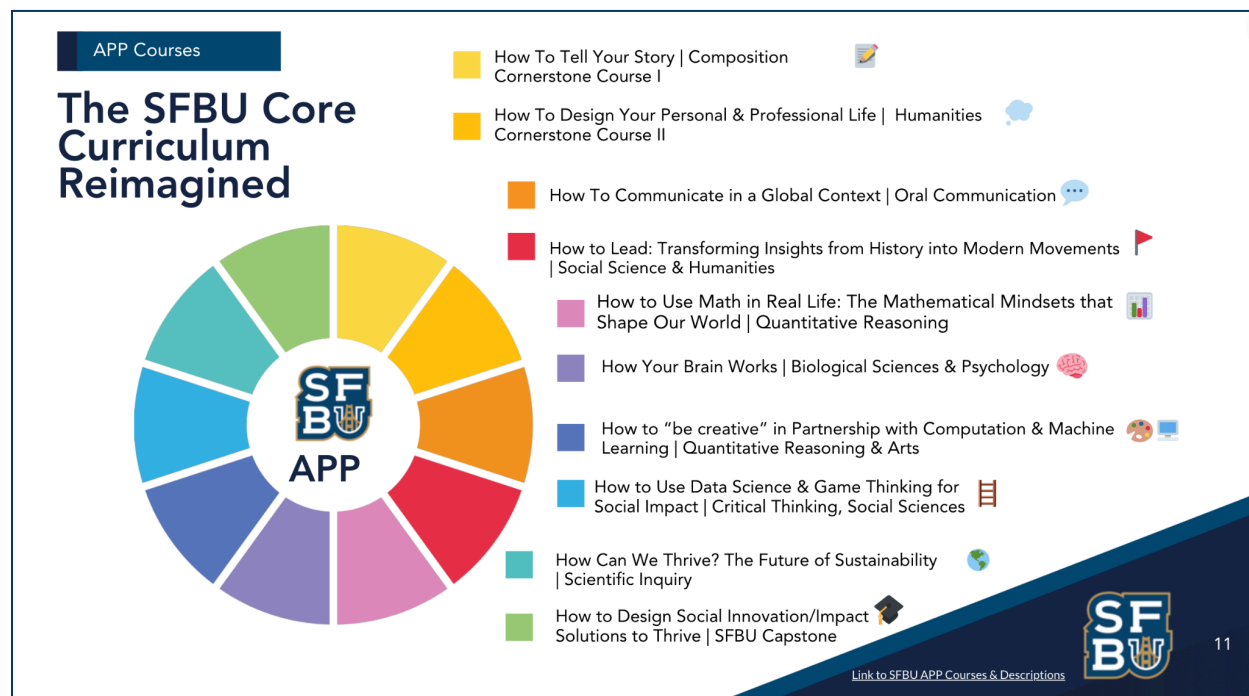

Figure 4: SFBU's APP Courses

Officially launched in the fall of 2024, the APP guides students through three stages of learning: think, do, and create. APP courses have been thoughtfully designed to assist students in achieving fifteen

competencies measured by specific behavioral indicators, which lead to the embodiment of five identities: tenacious leader, interpersonally gifted, global navigator, tech trendsetter, and enlightened thinker. These externally validated identities encapsulate the shared spirit of SFBU undergraduate students and alumni, reflecting a unique Bayhawk experience. Finally, this holistic redesign provided SFBU with an opportunity to fully actualize the institutional teaching model: PERS (Personalized, Experiential, Relational, and Student-Centered). This model, developed by SFBU's Chief Learning Officer via the Center for Empowerment and Pedagogical Innovation (CEPI), guides SFBU faculty within the APP and our degree programs in crafting curricular experiences that go beyond the classroom to cultivate lifelong skills, critical thinking, and global adaptability. SFBU's Faculty Guidebook on Pedagogical Practices is included in Appendix III.

Future Degree Programs and Academic Initiatives

SFBU's comprehensive reinvention also includes a five-year plan for new academic programs and non-degree initiatives, including two new programs in psychology planned for 2026-2027 (undergraduate psychology program) and 2027-2028 (graduate psychology program). This exploration of new content areas beyond business, computer science, and engineering are part of an institutional strategy to recruit and retain additional domestic students, which was a recommendation from SFBU's initial accreditation process with WSCUC. Though, it is notable that SFBU has applied but has not yet been approved to offer Title IV federal financial aid. Without this approval, the institution will continue to discount tuition considerably and understands that this financial commitment is not sustainable. This is further explored in Section 3 below.

SFBU's pursuit of 90-credit, three-year undergraduate degrees in Business and Computer Science is ongoing. The university submitted four structural change proposals to the WSCUC Substantive Change Committee in early 2025 to seek approval for 90-credit versions of the BSBA and BSCS, in both in-person and online modalities. The panel review, held on May 29, 2025, resulted in a request for

revisions and resubmission of all four proposals. Increasing accessibility to higher education and decreasing the cost of education to students remains a priority for SFBU. The institution looks forward to addressing all areas identified in the panel review and working with the accreditor to ensure the viability of this emerging academic initiative.

In addition to academic degree programs, SFBU is currently considering partnerships with numerous Southeast Asian universities in which we would deliver 30 credits of online, asynchronous content to qualified transfer students. We are currently deeply engaged in envisioning how AI will change the future of higher education and how SFBU might position itself as innovative leaders in this work, as well as asynchronous online learning.

Faculty

The institutional and leadership changes at SFBU in the past two years have also brought about a significant reshaping of the SFBU Faculty. In June 2024, a new Provost was appointed with the charge of redefining academic operations, flattening the extant "School/Dean" structure, and creating new faculty expectations to align with emerging teaching frameworks from SFBU's Center for Empowerment and Pedagogical Innovation (CEPI). Prior to Fall 2024, SFBU had four long-serving full-time faculty with an average compensation of about $75,000. The Faculty was overseen by the Dean of the School of Engineering and the Dean of the School of Business. SFBU also had a pool of adjunct faculty to meet the demands of each semester.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the School of Engineering and School of Business were reformed into a department structure. The Dean of the School of Business retired and the Dean of Engineering competed for and won a national search to serve SFBU in the newly created role of Associate Provost. National searches were launched for teaching faculty to serve in the role of founding chair for the Department of Business and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Upon completion of those searches, additional national searches were completed for Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows in each

department. Additionally, searches for founding chair and Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in Psychology were also completed. Faculty compensation is approximately $90,000 for the Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow and $115,000 for Faculty. Commensurately, adjunct compensation was also increased and regional searches were conducted to broaden the talent pool. (CFR 2.5) SFBU has a student-faculty ratio of 10 to 1 for undergraduate students and 26 to 1 for graduate students. All in-person classes are capped at 20 students per section.

As a long-standing practice, SFBU does not use the traditional faculty rank and tenure system nor are full-time faculty expected to maintain a research portfolio. Full-time Professors teach around nine courses per year and are encouraged to assist students through close mentorship, jointly produced scholarship, and career counseling. Postdoctoral Fellows complete a modest amount of research in addition to teaching around seven courses per year. (CFR 2.8) All faculty are evaluated through the performance evaluation process conducted by Human Resources, with adjunct faculty completing a less-rigorous process aimed at tracking accomplishments and connecting with professional development opportunities. Course evaluation data is reviewed by the Provost each semester, classroom observations of adjuncts are conducted by the Chair and Chief Learning Officer, and observations of full-time faculty are also conducted by peers, the Chief Learning Officer, and the Provost. Additionally, student-led feedback focus groups are conducted to gain additional insights into curricular relevancy, instructor efficacy, and the general student experience. This data is shared with the Provost and Chair as appropriate and considered when making course assignments and personnel decisions.

Faculty Shared Governance

Once the Provost had assembled the core team of faculty, an offsite retreat was held on October 22, 2024 specifically to address the mechanics of shared governance. The Faculty Handbook, By-Laws, and Faculty Assembly structure were reexamined by the newly hired team. Following the faculty retreat, a new draft of the Faculty Handbook was distributed to the Faculty Assembly, voted upon and unanimously approved on January 17, 2025. This meeting of the Faculty Assembly also saw the election of new officers of the Faculty Assembly.

With the core team of faculty in place and the newly refined shared governance structure functioning, the faculty and staff in Academic Affairs met at another offsite retreat on May 2, 2025 to craft the [2026-2030 Academic Plan](#). SFBU's SAV2 requested the institution address two areas related to shared governance: the configuration of the Faculty Assembly and the utilization of "formal academic processes more intentionally to support the faculty's demonstrated leadership." Restarting SFBU's Faculty Assembly in 2024-2025 allowed newly hired full-time faculty and returning adjuncts to imagine the role of shared governance in partnership with an entirely new administrative structure and set expectations for faculty leadership in institutional decision making. (CFR 2.6)

Faculty-led Assessment of Student Learning

SFBU's faculty members are integral to the institution's commitment to educational excellence. Faculty lead the development of curriculum, assess student performance through signature assignments and capstone projects, and maintain connections with leading industry experts to ensure degree relevance (CFR2.7). Faculty members are responsible for course delivery and for the development and continuous refinement of learning outcomes. They are actively involved in the creation of learning assessments, ensuring that student outcomes align with the university's mission and the evolving demands of the job market.

Faculty-led assessment of student learning at the institution includes regular assessments of student work, which are aligned with the institution's assessment rubrics. SFBU's learning outcome structure is built from WSCUC's former core competencies and rubrics were developed based on the AAC&U's VALUE system. For example, MSCS faculty assess students' written and oral communication skills, as well as their technical problem-solving and analytical abilities through a variety of signature assignments and capstone projects. This ensures that the faculty's evaluations are aligned with established academic standards and institutional expectations.

Faculty involvement in curriculum development is another area where their impact is evident (CFR 2.5). Faculty members are actively involved in curriculum mapping, which ensures that courses progressively build upon foundational knowledge and lead students to achieve mastery-level outcomes.

Additionally, faculty regularly update course content to incorporate new industry trends and technological advancements, keeping the curriculum current and relevant.

Student learning and performance

Following comprehensive institutional changes, SFBU has been diligently reworking the programmatic and institutional assessment structure and rethinking the data gathered on student learning achievement. Following recommendations in the initial accreditation process with WSCUC, the institution launched a program review schedule starting in 2018 and lasting until 2022. Program reviews from 2021 and 2022 are included in Appendix I. Low enrollment across all programs following the COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant challenge to completing this work. Total enrollment hit a low of 20 students in summer 2020 and slowly rebuilt over the next four years with 57 students in fall 2021, 165 in fall 2022, 328 in fall 2023, and 389 students in fall 2024 in all academic programs.

Additionally, the annual review of student learning across academic programs was started but has not yet transitioned into a reliable system. Due to low enrollment, signature assignments to assess PLOs were developed and spread throughout all program curricula, so each program was collecting data on each PLO every semester. This has allowed SFBU to collect a wealth of data on PLO achievement, but low sample sizes, lack of inter-rater reliability, and breadth of information collected creates challenges in identifying where changes should be made to improve student learning. The building blocks for a healthy assessment practice at SFBU are in place – faculty are aware of the responsibilities related to academic assessment and active in their pursuit of reliable data on the student experience. Still, areas of opportunity exist for the institution to refine this practice and collect data that is reliable and useful in programmatic and institutional decision making.

Institutional & Program Learning Outcome Assessment

The institution's academic assessment process began in earnest in the Spring of 2017 with the emergence of signature assignments. Between 2017 and summer 2024, full- and part-time faculty used LiveText to

compile data on student learning performance. In the fall of 2024, SFBU closed LiveText and transitioned to the assessment of PLOs in Canvas. This transition provides convenience for faculty scoring students within the existing Canvas LMS and provides transparency to students who are able to view rubrics and PLO achievement within the system.

Historically, SFBU's Office of Institutional Research pulls data and compiles information on ILO and PLO achievement in a PowerBI dashboard. This dashboard is shared with faculty, staff, and administrators and used by program faculty to identify areas for improvement within their programs. These dashboards allow users to differentiate by program and degree type, view institutional or program learning outcomes, see trends, and disaggregate by student demographics.
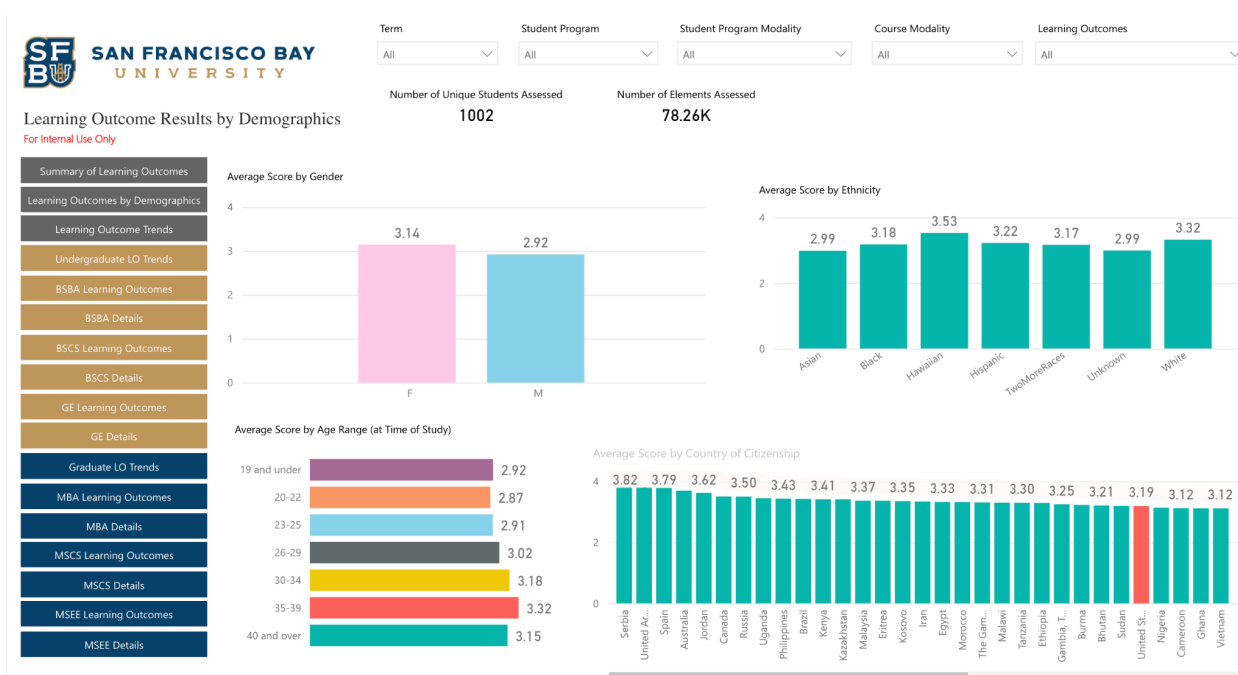

Figure 5: PowerBI Dashboard

Following the transition, assessment data from Canvas has been reported in Excel. Currently, SFBU is working to integrate Canvas-based assessment data with historical data from LiveText while migrating the reporting system to Tableau. The goal is to ensure continuity and improve the accessibility and interactivity of assessment reports.

The new Tableau dashboards will continue to support academic programs by allowing users to disaggregate results by program and degree level, track Institutional and Program Learning Outcomes over time, and analyze student performance by various demographic groups. These tools provide valuable insights to faculty, staff, and administrators for continuous improvement and decision-making.

Student Capstone Experience: A Comprehensive Review

Across all programs, SFBU's assessment of PLOs relies heavily on student work exhibited in the undergraduate and graduate capstone experiences. SFBU prioritizes industry-aligned, hands-on curriculum that prepares students to enter a dynamic technological workforce. In the fall of 2024, faculty and administrators met to discuss areas of improvement related to the student capstone experience. A total of 64 students were enrolled in seven capstone courses for the MBA, MSEE, MSCS, and BSCS programs.

Following the evaluation of student work products from fall 2024, faculty identified areas of improvement related to the delivery of the capstone courses, alignment with syllabi, and quality of the student experience. In Spring 2025, Professor Ahmed Banafa led a comprehensive review and redesign of the capstone experience in partnership with faculty in the Department of Business and Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Capstone syllabi across programs were reviewed and refreshed, assessment rubrics and plans were updated, and faculty came together to support each other and their students throughout the delivery of the capstone experience in spring 2025. Notably, this process led to SFBU's first Student Capstone Expo held on Saturday, April 26, 2025 which featured poster presentations from 30 teams on a variety of projects tackling real-world challenges with AI, machine learning, and technology-driven solutions.

Indirect Assessment: Student Feedback & Institutional Change

One area of great success at SFBU has been engaging students as active participants in the development of the institution through feedback mechanisms including surveys and focus groups. In the fall of 2024, questions arose on the reliability of SFBU's standard mid- and end-of-semester course and instructor evaluations. To investigate this, SFBU's Chief Learning Officer, in partnership with the Office

of Accreditation and Assessment, created a plan to conduct student-led focus groups in the spring of 2025. A graduate student assistant was recruited, trained, and compensated for their time conducting the focus groups.

Information was gathered from a range of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the BSBA, BSCS, MBA, MSCS, and MSEE programs. Students were asked to describe what worked about their courses, what was challenging for them as students, and what needs change. The findings from this initiative went beyond what SFBU was able to gather from course evaluations alone. Students were found to be in alignment with SFBU's PERS teaching framework and commitment to innovative teaching approaches, reporting appreciation for industry-aligned topics, hands-on projects, multiple pathways to learning, and class sessions with active peer engagement. Students also identified areas for improvement in specific courses and more broadly across programs – requesting deviation from lecture-only formats, increased rigor in graduate-level courses, and increased responsiveness from instructors. Finally, students provided feedback on specific instructors with strong pedagogical practices and those who require additional support from CEPI and administrators in Academic Affairs. The high-level findings and departmental recommendations from these focus groups are included in Appendix III..

In addition to focus groups, SFBU's Office of Institutional Research has made significant progress in collecting student feedback to inform institutional decision making. SFBU is now a member of the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) and administers four surveys including the Student Satisfaction, Sense of Community, Graduating Student, and New Student survey. In addition to HEDS, SFBU also collects student feedback via a First Destination Survey for all graduates, a Core Competency survey for undergraduate students completing the general education requirements, and a Startup Scholar Orientation survey for new Startup Scholars who attend the program's orientation.
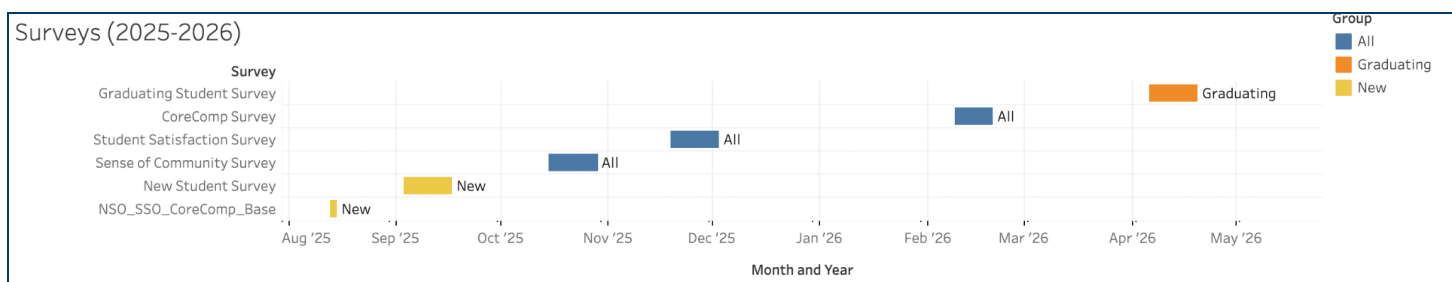
Figure 6: 2025-2025 IR Survey Schedule

Student Support

San Francisco Bay University achieves its educational and student success objectives through the core functions of teaching and learning, and through support for students' learning, scholarship, and creative activity. By explicitly highlighting our dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the institution ensures that initiatives cater to the needs of all students. Student Success is one of the six pillars of SFBU, with the goal of supporting students during their overall journey and providing skills for lifelong success. This is accomplished through our Student Success Hub both as a physical space and an offering of services to support students' physical, spiritual, emotional, financial, and nutritional needs, to radically welcome their whole selves. The Student Success Hub was established as part of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. SFBU offers a wraparound approach by offering a collective of student success professionals and topical areas of support in academic advising, accessibility and disability services, career services, financial aid, health and wellness, residential life, student life, and student success (CFR 2.13). Students also have access to a career closet, stocked with professional clothing that can be used for interviews and internships, the SFBU food pantry, and free bus passes through a partnership with AC Transit.

Student engagement in these wraparound services will be tracked via the Salesforce Student Success portal, which will launch in full prior to fall 2025. SFBU faculty and staff have been testing, building, and refining the Salesforce platform to work as a one-stop solution to track students from application through degree completion. The Student Success portal provides faculty, staff, and

administrators with a 360° perspective that connects staff and faculty across campus on the unique needs of each individual student.

Academic Advising (CFR 2.12)

At SFBU, we want students to foster and be guided by multiple meaningful relationships. Faculty provide a cornerstone of support for students as they navigate their academic journey and work collaboratively with staff Student Success Counselors to ensure students understand the requirements of their degree programs and have access to the invaluable support resources within the Student Success Hub. Students are expected to formally meet with a full-time faculty member or their assigned Student Success Counselor at least once per semester to discuss current and planned academic work, student wellbeing, and more. Student Success Counselors offer academic and personal counseling to support all students' success and assist in accessing University resources. Students are encouraged to meet with faculty more frequently throughout the academic year to engage in ancillary academic and career-planning discussions.

Academic Support Specialists

In addition to Student Success Counselors, SFBU also employs two Academic Support Specialists in Mathematics and English. SFBU is also seeking a third specialist with expertise in Computer Science. Academic Support Specialists serve as resources for students and for faculty with students who may be struggling with aspects of their coursework. These specialists provide 1:1 support to students on campus and virtually. They attend classes, host events, and dialogue with faculty on the needs of students.

Accessibility and Disability Services

SFBU is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible learning environment for all students. Our Accessibility and Disability Office is dedicated to championing the needs of students with disabilities by ensuring equal access to academic programs, services, and facilities. Services offered include coordinating disability accommodations, providing accessibility resources to community

members, providing advocacy and support for students with disabilities, and offering educational workshops and training sessions.

Career Services

Career Services offers SFBU students career-related resources through seminars, speaker series, and one-on-one counseling. The following major services offered by Career Services include job skills seminars, semesterly job fairs, resume preparation support, personalized career counseling, job postings via Handshake, and additional events. Career Services also organizes a number of mentorship programs available to students.

Health and Wellness

SFBU prioritizes wellness holistically, paying equal attention to students' physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. As one of the six pillars of the student experience, wellness is central to our ultimate goal of graduating mature, responsible and well-adjusted leaders. The mission of Health and Wellness is to empower students to take charge of their health and well-being by providing a supportive environment and the necessary tools to thrive academically, socially, and personally. We are committed to fostering a culture of wellness that promotes resilience, self-care, and lifelong healthy habits.

Our Health and Wellness Program is dedicated to promoting our students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Our comprehensive approach ensures that students can access resources and support to maintain a healthy lifestyle throughout their academic journey. Services offered include:

- Counseling Services: Licensed therapists provide unlimited individual and group counseling to support mental health, manage stress, and address personal challenges.
- Wellness Workshops: Regular workshops and seminars covering topics such as stress management, mindfulness, sleep hygiene, and substance abuse prevention.
- Crisis Intervention: Immediate support and resources are available for students experiencing emergencies or crises.

Residential Life

San Francisco Bay University offers non-traditional [university campus housing](#) for both undergraduate and graduate students, providing a unique housing experience where living on campus is an important part of the student's developmental journey. The institution currently offers 20 apartment units for student use, housing a total of 76 students and eight Residential Assistants (for a total of 84 students). Students live in double-occupancy rooms in condo-style apartments. Students interested in on-campus housing are chosen through a lottery system, except for Startup Scholars, who are guaranteed housing. For fall 2025, students are charged $4,000 per semester in addition to a $500 housing deposit. University-owned housing is located within a short walk from campus. SFBU Residential Life is supervised by one full-time Residential Community Coordinator.

Start Up Scholars

Inaugurated in 2024 as an outgrowth of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, the Startup Scholars program is a cohort-based initiative that provides deserving students across Silicon Valley with full access to educational opportunities and resources for success. Startup Scholars are offered free tuition and housing for four years, a food allowance, a laptop computer, and free summer bridge program. Each Startup Scholar also receives $10,000 to support their passion project which must lead to a positive social impact. This program is open to first-generation, domestic students who demonstrate financial need and submit a plan for their passion project alongside their SFBU application. Startup Scholars agree to remain enrolled for a minimum of two years. SFBU currently has 13 Startup Scholars in the 2024 cohort and is planning to welcome 12 additional students for the 2025 cohort, starting Fall 2025.

The Startup Scholars program ensures adequate resources and support are provided so that first-generation scholars may completely focus on their education with no additional barriers to success. Beyond scholarship funding, the program resources include advising, tutoring services, career services, counseling, and mentorship led by staff, faculty, and SFBU's President and Board of Directors. This program aims to create a community of learners, bringing their cultural and community wealth to higher

education. The program also empowers scholars to bring together community-led change to advance economic and social mobility in the Bay Area.

Student Life

Student Life at SFBU is vibrant, offering student government, clubs, events, and activities to support life outside of the classroom. The student government was recently revamped by SFBU's Dean of Students, an election was held, and the new student leaders were announced in Spring 2025. These leaders have already been active in creating opportunities for students, providing feedback on initiatives to faculty and staff, and participating in the creation of the institutional report for WSCUC.

SFBU's small student body is extremely excited to offer 24 student-led clubs in research, wellness, public speaking, crafting, and more. Our students are active, driven, and social, and the student clubs are one avenue for them to bring their interests and ideas to life at SFBU. All student clubs have a faculty or staff advisor and clubs are open to all SFBU community members. These groups are an excellent way for students to meet new people and for SFBU employees to connect with the students we serve every day.

Student Support & Co-curricular Assessment (CFR 2.14)

Similar to academic assessment, the evaluation of co-curricular programs and services at SFBU is evolving. The establishment of a student affairs unit was a top priority articulated in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and, following the staffing and scaling of the unit, the implementation of a meaningful assessment practice is in progress. Led by the Dean of Students and Senior Director of Wellness, SFBU is aligning student support and co-curricular programs with standards developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Following the established program review process from CAS, SFBU is aligning mission statements, articulating program goals, identifying the metrics used for evaluation, and establishing a multi-year student support and co-curricular assessment strategy.

Standard 3 – Assuring Resources and Organizational Structures

Strategic Plan: A Roadmap for Reinvention

Although SFBU is 40 years old, in this moment of reinvention the institution is best understood as a startup. The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan reflects our focus on executing this pivot. The strategic plan emphasizes creation and implementation of foundational plans for enrollment, brand, student success, external partnerships, and operational effectiveness—all enabled by a relentless commitment to serve students, by core values anchored by holistic care for students, and by a wholehearted embrace of innovation to improve on the traditional practices and remove common barriers found in higher education. SFBU's enrollment plan can be found in Appendix III.

This context has some meaningful implications for SFBU's resources and resource allocation. SFBU is building (or re-building) significant portions of its academic and administrative operations from the ground up, and preparing for a future enrollment of around 2,000 students. The institution is working quickly and methodically to operationalize the plan, but at this stage of transformation some areas remain in states of transition and not yet fully mature. Current deficits in operating revenues versus operating expenses, an extremely low student-staff ratio, and substantial expenditures on contracted professional services for planning and capacity building, all reflect SFBU's commitment to using its investment portfolio to establish program capacity for the enrollment we are growing toward—so that the program, policy, and personnel are in place to deliver on our educational mission as our enrollment grows (CFRs 3.1, 3.4). In the context of a startup, financial success is evaluated by the ability to expand capacity for future revenue generation. SFBU measures progress against a multi-year plan for a sustainable business model, one that aligns our investments with our core mission of providing affordable tuition through substantial institutional financial support (CFR 3.4).

SFBU has a strong framework in place to operationalize the strategic plan and integrate it with other institutional planning and resource allocation (CFR 3.4). Each area of strategic focus includes several specific initiatives, each of which has one or more completion metrics and an executive champion who is responsible for driving progress on that initiative. The Vice President of Strategy & Innovation is charged with monitoring progress and meets quarterly with the executive champions to review the status of each initiative and metrics, and provides regular updates to the president's cabinet and the Board of Directors (CFRs 3.9, 3.10). This structure promotes transparency and accountability for demonstrable progress and measurable results (CFRs 3.9, 3.10, 3.11).

Two major milestones achieved in the first six months – and critical enablers for operationalizing the rest of the strategic plan – were the creation of a strategic financial model and development of a strategic enrollment plan. SFBU recognized that it did not have effective financial planning tools in place for scenario modeling to support informed decision-making. In order to meet its ambitious commitments to accessible, affordable, and quality education for all, SFBU identified the need for an advanced planning model to ensure a responsible pathway to success. SFBU engaged Huron Consulting to assist with building an interdependent strategic financial model and enrollment plan to support a financially sustainable and realistic plan for growing SFBU's enrollment in a way that would provide the academic and student service program needed for overall success (CFRs 3.4, 3.5, 3.11).

The strategic financial model is a comprehensive financial decision support tool that provides both balance sheet and income statement considerations, including operating revenues and expenses, investment earnings and payouts, reserve ratios, and capital asset acquisitions and disposals. The primary engine of the model is detailed enrollment and net tuition revenue projections (reflecting both the recruitment funnel, persistence/graduation rates, and assumptions regarding institutional aid and potential future Title IV financial aid). The enrollment projections drive not only net student revenues, but also faculty and staff FTE needs, related program expenses, and requirements for space utilization. It allows fine-tuning of most variables for each year of the projection (over 300 inputs in total), enabling the model

to reflect a realistic mix of gradual, compounding, and stair-step type rates of change across various drivers of revenue and expense as SFBU makes its transformational pivot. The Huron financial modeling team worked closely with key SFBU leadership as well as the Huron enrollment planning team, to develop, validate, and iterate the model design and variable inputs.

The result is a financial model that has real utility in strategic SFBU decision-making (CFRs 3.10, 3.11). The model was used in Spring 2024 to test a variety of scenarios around graduate and undergraduate enrollment, pricing and tuition discounts, average course section size, staff and program expense growth, and fundraising capabilities. The scenario testing revealed key parameters for SFBU's best pathways to mission-aligned financial sustainability within five years: total enrollment of 1400 – 1700 FTE, weighted about 55-60% graduate to 40-45% undergrad, with differential graduate program pricing helping to subsidize an exceptional commitment to undergraduate affordability (CFR 3.4). These key findings, and a summary of the modeling work that informed them, were shared with the Board of Directors in a joint meeting of the Finance Committee and Academic Affairs Committee (CFR 3.7).

Unlike a traditional budget limited to department-level plans, the consolidated, high-level strategic financial model operates at the institution-level, incorporating interdependent key variables that can be adjusted to optimize outcomes aligned with SFBU's mission. It is a critical tool that provides management with an objective framework for evaluating mission-driven decisions focused on achieving a financially sustainable model (CFR 3.10). Scenario modeling can be performed considering key items such as enrollment, tuition, financial aid, etc. that would then drive and influence facility needs, faculty/staff growth, fundraising efforts, etc. Results of analysis can guide planning for the pacing of expenditures and timing of cash outlays to invest responsibly in faculty and staff growth, facilities, student housing, and other key areas needed to successfully support the projected enrollment (CFR 3.4). The framework provides ongoing assessment metrics for evaluating whether the institution is on track to achieve the goal of reaching an operating surplus by 2029, and facilitating course-correction as needed (CFRs 3.10, 3.11). The model is "owned" by the CFO, who is charged with a semi-annual model refresh, or more frequent updates depending on the magnitude of organizational changes that could impact the

model. The model is evaluated regularly with actuals and near-term forecasts in collaboration with other senior colleagues, and providing monitoring reports to the president's cabinet and Board of Directors (CFRs 3.10, 3.11).

The strategic financial model and enrollment plan together form an essential planning foundation that informs other planning work required to operationalize the strategic plan (CFRs 3.4, 3.11). Key constituents provided essential inputs—projected enrollment, timeline, and financial capacity—to SFBU's conceptual campus master planning in Spring 2024. SFBU engaged higher education design firm AC Martin to develop options for expanding the academic, student service, and administrative physical plant through renovation of university-owned buildings. The strategic enrollment plan has already resulted in assisting leadership in making operational decisions, such as SFBU's decision in Spring 2024 to initiate planning for a three-year, 90-credit bachelor's degree offering, as a key differentiator and a mission-aligned approach to enable students to complete their degree and get into the workforce faster and at lower cost. An academic growth strategy has been developed following the appointment of a new Provost in summer 2024. The financial model and the conceptual campus master plan also offered critical guidance about the range of ongoing and capital project fundraising that are likely to be needed, providing important parameters for planning now underway to establish a university advancement function (CFRs 3.4, 3.10, 3.11).

The use of the model to assist in the optimal integration and sequencing of these planning efforts demonstrates clearly that SFBU's leadership is committed to using a thoughtful, methodical, data-informed approach to executing a transformational institutional pivot. [CFR 3.4, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11]

Building Capacity with Financial Sustainability

San Francisco Bay University has an ambitious but realistic five-year plan to achieve financial sustainability. SFBU's leadership is well aware that its current *operating* deficits (operating revenues less operating expenses) are not sustainable, nor are they meant to be a long-term strategy. Operating deficits

were ($9.8M) in 2023, ($11.3M) in 2024, and ($14.9M) projected for 2025. The short-term *operating* deficits reflect heavy investment in building SFBU's capacity to recruit and serve a growing student body, ranging from one-time expenses for consulting and interim staffing (about $4.5M of the $6.5M professional fees budget), to expanding staff headcount from 44 to 76 in calendar 2024 as the institution invests in enrollment management, full-time faculty, student affairs, academic support, campus operations, institutional effectiveness, compliance and risk management, and advancement (CFR 3.4).

It is important to note that the deficits above are based only on operating revenues and operating expenses. They exclude any gains/losses generated from SFBU's overall unrestricted investment portfolio (which totaled $275M in December 2024). Total investment gains are substantial and are not included in those numbers above, providing additional income of $48M for 2023 and $38M in 2024. When those gains are included in the financial analysis, the overall "bottom line" (which is the overall change in net assets taking into consideration operating income, operating expenses, and all investment gains and losses) reflects a more positive picture: the overall results were actually income of $41.8M in 2023 and income of $17.2M in 2024. For 2025, a conservative estimate of investment returns was projected (SFBU used 6% for 2025 investment gains as compared to actual returns in 2023 of 11% and 2024 of 15%). With this conservative estimate, the bottom line is projected to be a loss of $9.5M.

The capacity building phase of the five-year plan is being subsidized by SFBU's robust balance sheet. Net assets grew from $239.5M at 12/31/2019 to $304.9M at 12/31/2023; within that, unrestricted cash and investments grew from $186.7M at 12/31/2019 to $263M at 12/31/2023 (CFR 3.5). SFBU's investment pool is entirely unrestricted; it is neither endowed nor quasi-endowed, and the board retains complete flexibility in how these assets are deployed for current and long-term purposes. In 2024, The board adopted an investment policy and spending rule that established an annual investment pool payout for operations (4.3% of a 12 trailing quarter average of its investment portfolio), and the board is prepared to withdraw additional amounts over the next few years to assure sufficient cash flow for operations and capital expenses (CFRs 3.4, 3.5, 3.7).

SFBU took a number of major steps in 2023 and 2024 to establish critical infrastructure for the planned growth in enrollment and programs:

Title IV and Cal Grant Eligibility. SFBU is not yet eligible for Title IV federal financial aid, and is therefore also ineligible to participate in the Cal Grant state program. This constrains SFBU's ability to recruit and enroll domestic students, and puts the full burden on SFBU to help students afford their cost of education through institutional aid. In Fall 2023, SFBU engaged Huron Consulting to assist in preparing the institution's application to the Title IV program; this was submitted in April 2024. Based on Department of Education guidance that application backlogs are up to three years, the SFBU financial plan assumes Title IV and Cal Grant eligibility will begin Fall 2027 (CFRs 3.4, 3.5).

Administrative information management platforms. In 2023, SFBU initiated a cascading two-year plan for implementing major new platforms, replacing antiquated systems with an integrated set of powerful, modern information systems (CFR 3.6).

- In 2024, SFBU replaced QuickBooks with Sage Intacct to be the university's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software. Sage Intacct is a powerful, cloud-based financial management and accounting software that is designed to streamline and enhance financial operations. Sage Intacct's robust software and dimensional chart of accounts has enabled SFBU to adopt fund accounting and provide additional management reporting for regular budget to actual analysis. In addition, SFBU implemented Sage Intact Planning (SIP), a cloud-based planning tool, designed to simplify financial planning, by seamlessly integrating with Sage Intacct. SIP helps businesses and finance teams make better, faster, and strategic decisions. Both Sage Intacct and SIP will support the more complex accounting, budgeting, and multi-level management financial reporting SFBU will require to manage a larger and more financially complex organization with accountability and transparency. SFBU had a successful go-live April 1, 2024 and utilized a year of

hypercare support to develop and roll out automated financial dashboards, self-service financial reports for managers, and maintain the 2025 budget.

- Salesforce is the new student information system (SIS) and customer relationship management (CRM) platform. Salesforce gives SFBU the ability to manage the entire student lifecycle from admissions to alumni engagement. The Recruitment & Admissions and Marketing Cloud modules launched first, in August 2024, reflecting the urgency of replacing a cumbersome and limited legacy system for enrollment funnel management. This was followed in Spring 2025 by the Student Success module, SIS module, and finally the Alumni & Advancement module. Salesforce will be our end-to-end student lifecycle enterprise system, from inquiry-to-alumni, all student data will be housed under one integrated umbrella and is expected to be fully functional prior to fall 2025.

- Regent Education will provide SFBU's first-ever financial aid management system, an essential tool as SFBU prepares to add Title IV and Cal Grant aid sources, to use financial aid in a more targeted way to meet our enrollment and affordability goals, and to efficiently manage a more complex financial aid operation for a growing student body. Regent integrates with Salesforce, ensuring a seamless flow of student aid and payment information among the Regent FA system, Salesforce student accounts, and Sage Intacct general ledger and financial reporting. Implementation is scheduled to begin as soon as the Salesforce SIS is live.

These new systems join earlier major implementations: Canvas was adopted in 2023 as the learning management system, and Trinet was adopted in 2024 as the university's Professional Employer Organization (PEO) and HR/benefits information system. Smaller upgrades have also been made, for example, through the integration of the Qwikly attendance platform with Canvas and CultureAmp for faculty and staff performance reviews in spring 2025. This systematic modernization of information platforms reflects the understanding by SFBU's board and

leadership that information—timely, accurate, reliable, accessible—is absolutely essential to successful execution of SFBU's strategic plan (CFR 3.6).

Faculty, Staff, Leadership Capacity

The strategic financial plan includes projections for our faculty, staff, and administration to grow as our enrollment does. Over the past two years, SFBU has substantially restructured our administration and key staff offices, rebuilding around our values of innovation and relentless commitment to students. Key leadership hires include the President (June 2023), a new cabinet position VP for Strategy & Innovation (September 2023), Provost and VP of Academic Affairs (June 2024), VP and Chief Operating Officer (January 2024), General Counsel and Chief of Staff (April 2024), Chief Financial Officer (February 2025), and VP for Advancement (March 2025) (CFRs 3.1, 3.4, 3.9). This leadership team is exceptionally well qualified to lead an institution committed to educational attainment for communities not historically well-served by higher education.

SFBU has prioritized reorganizing and expanding staff offices that are critical to growing enrollment and establishing the foundations of our new core curriculum and holistic student services. We have restructured the enrollment team and modernized our recruitment capabilities to support a healthy mix of domestic, international, undergraduate, and graduate students (CFRs 3.1, 3.4). Student Affairs has been transformed, with new leadership roles building out new and expanded programming in student success, wellness, career services, residential life, and more (CFR 3.1). Our commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in teaching and learning is visible in the Center for Empowerment and Pedagogical Innovation, focused on ensuring every SFBU faculty members is well versed in effective and inclusive pedagogy, the new Accreditation and Assessment office, and professionalization of our Institutional Research office (CFRs 3.1, 3.3, 3.4). A team of Salesforce developers are part of the Strategy & Innovation division (along with Institutional Research), ensuring that SFBU's CRM/SIS platform is administered with a strategic and mission orientation: optimized not only to manage information flow and

business processes, but to generate performance analytics enabling real-time monitoring and data-rich evaluation of our programs and practices to foster continuous improvement (CFRs 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.10).

In Fall 2024 SFBU undertook a comprehensive revitalization of our faculty. The *number* of faculty FTE is driven by enrollment, based on our target (established in 2023) of keeping course sections at or below 20 students (CFRs 3.1, 3.2). The newly developed core curriculum and commitment to leading practices in teaching excellence called for a fresh approach to hiring, training, and evaluating a highly qualified corps of instructors committed to ongoing development of their pedagogical skills (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4). Accordingly, in 2024, the Provost took a fresh-start approach to reimagining the work of faculty and the organizational structure within Academic Affairs, as articulated in Section 2.

This period of growth has been taken due to the need to 'staff up' at the beginning of SFBU's enrollment re-growth so that programs and services are student-ready. For example, SFBU has hired both a full-time Professor of Psychology (to start August 2025) and a Postdoctoral Fellow in Psychology (started August 2024) to develop a new psychology department for both undergraduate and graduate students (pending WSCUC approval). Having established faculty in place to develop the curriculum, syllabi, and student experience is a purposeful investment made by the institution. Our strategic financial plan calls for the pace of staffing growth to slow as we reach the minimum critical mass of staff to deliver core services to a high standard, even as enrollment growth accelerates. Over time, our student-staff ratio will moderate to a more sustainable level (CFRs 3.1, 3.4).

Managing for Sustainable Success

As SFBU grows, decision-making structures and integrated planning are leveraged to make data-informed decisions, manage risk, and to steward the mission and resources of the institution.

Decision Making Structures

The Board of Directors exercises governance oversight both as a body and through its committees (CFR 3.7). The Board meets quarterly each year. For urgent decisions, the board employs a variety of tools, including limited delegation of authority to a committee to make a specific decision, as well as

resolutions adopted by unanimous written consent. Board committees (Academic Affairs, Audit, Executive Compensation and Housing, Finance and Investment, Governance, and Strategic Priorities) meet virtually, as frequently as their current slate of issues requires (CFRs 3.7, 3.9, 3.11).

The Board shares SFBU's institutional commitment to ongoing learning and adoption of leading practices. The Board has engaged in self-evaluation facilitated by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), received training and participated in reflection led by ABG, and engaged Huron to strengthen the quality of financial reporting to the Board and support the Board's development in financial oversight and stewardship (CFRs 3.7, 3.9). SFBU has worked to diversify its Board and recruit new members with relevant expertise and industry connections; today the Board includes eight members with a range of industry, education, and technological experience (CFR 3.8, 3.9).

The Board delegates authority – through its bylaws, committee charters, resolutions, and policies – to conduct the business of the university. Primary responsibility and authority for acting on behalf of the University is delegated to the President. The President acts with the counsel of the President's Cabinet – the Vice Presidents and "Chief" officers, in whom the President vests certain authorities for the day-to-day management of the university within their spheres of responsibility. The President's Cabinet meets weekly to coordinate without the President and biweekly with the President to engage in strategic planning, information sharing, and consultation. Each member meets individually with the President weekly. The President additionally receives counsel from the Leadership Council, a broader group of cabinet and department leaders who provide input and perspective from roles at the front line. The Faculty Assembly meets at least once per semester, or more frequently if needed. The Faculty Assembly can also move matters of curriculum or other academic matters within their purview forward through asynchronous email polls. In collaboration with Provost's Office, CEPI also regularly engages the Faculty, hosting workshops, seminars, and discussions, providing broad and frequent feedback channels. (CFRs 3.9, 3.11)

Enterprise Risk Management

As the institution grows, SFBU has prioritized understanding, and effective management of risk and compliance. In 2024, SFBU engaged Huron Consulting to complete an enterprise risk assessment that engaged the president, cabinet, key staff, and select board members. This exercise addressed financial, governance, legal/regulatory compliance, data security and privacy, operational effectiveness, reputational, safety, mental health, and other areas of potential risk. The findings were shared with the cabinet and with the Board. Each cabinet member has established risk mitigation plans for risks in their areas of responsibility. (CFR 3.11) The university also employs a General Counsel and established new leadership roles with specific responsibility for student grievance issues, Compliance and Risk Management, and Safety, Emergency Management, and Clery. An Associate Director of Title IX and Equity was hired in 2024. Inclusion of these leadership roles in SFBU's new organizational structure and staffing reflects our institutional commitment to proactively identifying and mitigating risk for our students, employees, and the institution. (CFRs 3.1, 3.9, 3.11)

Hiring and Training

SFBU understands that delivering excellence for our students requires hiring, training, developing, and retaining quality employees. Commitment to employee quality has been critical to our process of institutional transformation. Overhauling our Human Resources area was an early focus area in 2024 for our COO. SFBU hired new HR leadership and staff; established a detailed staff classification and compensation framework to guide position leveling and salary ranges; and created a standard process that engages HR as a key partner to hiring managers for creating position descriptions, setting compensation ranges, ensuring budget availability, recruiting candidates, and hiring new employees (CFR 3.2). SFBU has made strategic use of outsourced interim staff in key roles (e.g., finance, HR, marketing) to ensure business continuity, to lead periods of transition and evaluate future needs, and to ensure that we could afford to let searches take as long as necessary to fill key roles with exceptionally qualified people (CFR 3.1). A new, standardized onboarding process helps ensure new employees get a strong start and consistently have access to information and resources they need, and new online portals for staff, faculty,

and students created easy one-stop access to frequently used references, resources, and services (CFRs 3.2, 3.6). Staff and faculty handbooks were reviewed and combined to ensure consistent policies and processes. Universal and role-specific training requirements were established for new and continuing employees, and employee training completion is documented in an HR-managed system (CFR 3.3).

Financial Oversight and Internal Controls

SFBU has established robust financial oversight policies and procedures along with strong internal controls, demonstrated by the auditor's issuance of unqualified audit opinions, meaning clean audit reports with no material misstatements or concerns identified (CFR 3.5). The institution continues to strengthen financial oversight and internal controls. In 2024, SFBU began a comprehensive review and refresh of the accounting handbook with an aim of not only strengthening control and oversight, but also streamlining policies and procedures to improve compliance through greater transparency and ease of use. Updated policies and procedures for procurement, travel and business expense, accounts payable, internal controls and delegation of authority, and budget were drafted; reviewed by general counsel, President Ladany, and by an assurance team at Moss Adams (the firm that conducts SFBU's annual financial audit); and adopted by the Finance Committee of the Board (CFRs 3.5, 3.7, 3.11). Information about the new financial procedures was shared through cabinet, posted on the employee portal, and new staff training was piloted (CFRs 3.3, 3.6).

Financial oversight is also a focus in the new financial reporting process to increase transparency and accountability. In addition to the strategic financial model's facilitation of institution-level financial planning and oversight, SFBU instituted in late 2023 a monthly university financial report that is provided to the president and COO (and quarterly to the Board of Directors) covering budget vs actual revenues and expenses, detailed balance sheets with additional information provided for key areas such as cash and investments and property and equipment. Monthly, the CFO meets with all budget managers to review budget to actual results to ensure compliance with budget and identify any areas of concern. All of this financial reporting empowers managers at every level – from department managers to the Board – to be more informed, more accountable, and better stewards of the institution's resources (CFRs 3.9, 3.10).

Budgeting and Resource Allocation

In the context of SFBU's ongoing pivot, departmental or divisional spending plans may vary significantly year-over-year – some ramping up rapidly as operations scale, others dropping off sharply as one-time or limited up-front investments are completed. Thus each year's budgeting process is closer to a zero-base approach than an incremental budget, and requires substantial collaboration (CFR 3.4). The CFO solicits budget proposals from cabinet members, using the strategic plan and the financial plan as yardsticks to evaluate whether budget requests are reasonable, prudent, and allocate appropriate resources to the strategic work planned for that year. Because SFBU's fiscal year aligns with the calendar year instead of the academic year, a mid-year adjustment was made in 2024, evidencing SFBU's active approach to budget management. SFBU's rapid planning meant that by early 2024, substantially more was known about the specific timing and order of investments in building organizational capacity, and the budget developed in fall 2023 no longer fairly represented the resource allocation needs for the year. The interim CFO worked with the president and cabinet members to review their financial plans for restructuring and expanding personnel; contracting for professional services, program planning support, and interim staffing; and technology, travel, professional development, and program delivery expenses. Budgets were revised to reflect the updated work plan for each area, and an amended institutional budget was reviewed and approved by the Board in May 2024. In September 2024 a similarly collaborative process was initiated to develop the 2025 budget (CFR 3.4).

Standard 4 – Creating an Institution Committed to Quality Assurance and Improvement

SFBU is committed to continuous institutional effectiveness through structured quality assurance processes and data-informed improvement efforts. These efforts are co-led by the Faculty, Provost, Office of Accreditation and Assessment, Office of Institutional Research, and CEPI. These constituents coordinate systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of data to support evidence-based decision-making.

SFBU employs a cycle of assessment and evaluation across academic and administrative units. The institution regularly collects data on student learning outcomes, retention and graduation rates, student satisfaction, and operational efficiency. This evidence is integrated into institutional planning and is reviewed by leadership and governance bodies to ensure alignment with strategic goals. Program reviews, annual assessment reports, surveys, and focus groups provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating academic quality and student success (CFR 4.1).

Insights from institutional research and assessment drive targeted improvements. For example, curriculum revisions, faculty development initiatives, and student support enhancements are informed by data trends and stakeholder feedback. Strategic planning processes incorporate findings from institutional analyses to adapt to emerging challenges, such as evolving workforce needs and technological advancements. SFBU maintains a nimble approach to planning, ensuring responsiveness to change while upholding academic integrity and mission alignment.

In support of quality assurance efforts, SFBU has implemented a robust, data-informed, and participatory quality assurance system that supports the university's mission to deliver inclusive, innovative, and inspirational education. SFBU's significant institutional transformation in the past years establishes the foundation for a sustainable culture of continuous improvement across academic, operational, and governance functions.

Comprehensive Institutional Quality Assurance

SFBU's Institutional Effectiveness model integrates planning, assessment, and improvement across academic and co-curricular functions. Institutional quality assurance is overseen by the Office of Institutional Research (IR), which manages PowerBI dashboards, provide timely insights on student performance, retention, and graduation rates. Additional reports generated via Salesforce focus on prospective student interest and enrollment. These dashboards are accessible to academic leadership and department chairs and inform curriculum reviews, course scheduling, and advising.

SFBU's academic program review cycle, restarted in 2024, incorporates five-year self-studies with embedded learning outcomes data, operational metrics, and financial analysis, as evidenced by the [internal review conducted by the Department of Business in 2025](). Each program review process concludes with a strategic action plan approved by the Provost and revisited annually. The university has adopted a developmental model that balances program autonomy with institutional consistency.

The IR team provides disaggregated student performance data by program, gender, modality, international/domestic status, and country of origin. Analysis of this data has led to targeted interventions, including expanded student support hours, orientation redesign, and new advising policies. For example, data from the withdrawal survey in Spring 2024 identified financial hardship as a key barrier to retention; this led to expanded institutional scholarships and a financial wellness program launched through the Student Success Hub (CFR 4.2).

SFBU has developed a "postmortem" review process following each academic term. Faculty and staff gather to assess onboarding, orientation, and early-term course feedback, and identify process gaps using data gathered at key points in the student experience. In 2025, feedback from these sessions led to the revision of advising pathways and enhanced communication protocols for new student arrivals. Climate surveys are also conducted annually, with results used to shape student services and professional development priorities (CFR 4.3).

SFBU's IR function has matured into a core driver of strategic planning and evaluation. The IR team produces a university [Factbook](#) and leads assessment workshops for academic leaders. In 2024–25, IR collaborated with the Provost's Office to design a teaching effectiveness dashboard, integrating student learning outcomes with classroom observation and course evaluation data (CFR 4.4).

A hallmark of SFBU's improvement model is its continuous loop between assessment, reflection, and resource allocation. Strategic planning processes are grounded in evidence and supported by IR-generated reports, accreditation readiness reviews, and stakeholder engagement. In Spring 2025, the university adopted an Academic Plan developed collaboratively by faculty, which prioritized innovation in general education, integration of AI tools in instruction, and expansion of reduced-credit degree programs (pending WSCUC approval) CFR 4.5).

Faculty play a central role in program assessment, curricular innovation, and teaching effectiveness. The Faculty Assembly revised its charter in 2024-25 to support lean, high-impact governance, and postdoctoral teaching fellows collaborate with department chairs on curriculum alignment and capstone assessment. All full-time faculty complete peer reviews and participate in instructional design workshops through CEPI (CFR 4.6). Student focus groups conducted in the Spring of 2025, for example, led to the creation of specific training resources for full- and part-time faculty scheduled in advance of the fall 2025 semester from August 11-14, 2025.

SFBU's Board of Directors has implemented annual self-evaluation practices in alignment with the Association of Governing Boards standards and utilizes an onboarding and mentoring process for new members. Six formal committees monitor strategic progress, compliance, and fiduciary responsibility. Board agendas now include educational sessions on higher education policy and innovation trends to support informed oversight (CFR 4.7). SFBU Leadership also engages in critical self reflection, goal-setting, and evaluation annually with the President to ensure accountability and progress in key operational areas (CFRs 4.1, 4.5).

Institutional Improvement: Planning, Strategy, and Future Vision

As detailed in this report, SFBU's 2023–2026 Strategic Plan emerged from cross-campus collaboration and includes six institutional priorities – The Six Pillars – linked to measurable outcomes. Each unit develops annual goals aligned with this plan, which are reviewed for progress each summer. The 2024 Readiness Summit and resulting Accreditation Gap Analysis demonstrated how SFBU uses strategic foresight and data to drive decision-making. Scenario planning is now embedded into leadership retreats, and AI-readiness, international diversification, and fiscal sustainability are among the focal points for the next strategic cycle.

As SFBU prepares to launch the next stage of strategic planning through 2030, robust participation from all areas of the institution has already begun. The Strategy and Innovation team has recruited and trained faculty and staff in conducting Spark Sessions to crowdsource real challenges and innovative, actionable solutions to actual problems faced by SFBU community members. Not only does this allow for a robust collection of areas of improvement for the institution, but allows the community to rally around systemic patterns that require fresh thinking. This is an initial stage in the strategic planning process that will ultimately lead to a 2027-2030 plan.

SFBU's commitment to Standard 4 is demonstrated through the development of agile systems for quality assurance, data-informed governance, and faculty-led educational effectiveness that allow faculty, staff, and students to see their expertise and imagination reflected in the institution. The university is well-positioned to continue maturing its culture of continuous improvement through aligned planning, integrated assessment, and intentional leadership.

Section C – Reflections – Synthesis of Insights as a Result of the Reaffirmation Process

San Francisco Bay University is at a significant point of institutional transformation, grounded in a clear strategic direction and institutional mission that emphasizes innovation, inclusivity, and responsiveness to evolving student and industry needs for a diverse student population. The extensive self-study process – in which our entire community engaged – demonstrates the university's commitment to redefining higher education through deliberate enhancements to academic programs, faculty governance, student services, and strategic resource allocation. Central to this reinvention is SFBU's adherence to its refreshed mission and vision, guiding its operational decisions and institutional culture toward providing a genuinely inclusive and impactful education.

A notable insight into the strategic vision for the institution and its future is SFBU's strategic alignment of resources and its disciplined approach to achieving financial sustainability amidst growth and change. The university continues to make substantial investments in infrastructure, technology, and personnel, demonstrating an understanding that short-term operational deficits are necessary for achieving long-term strategic goals. These investments include critical initiatives such as comprehensive system upgrades to enhance student lifecycle management, strategic financial modeling, and planning for Title IV eligibility to improve financial accessibility for domestic students.

SFBU's faculty model emphasizes lean governance structures aimed at rapid responsiveness and innovation. By intentionally selecting away from traditional governance models that would prove unwieldy and overly bureaucratic, SFBU has positioned itself uniquely in higher education to swiftly implement curricular innovations, exemplified by early adoption of emerging fields like blockchain and artificial intelligence. Faculty development and assessment practices are deeply embedded in this model and continue to evolve, ensuring curricular relevance and high-quality teaching aligned with institutional objectives.

Among these myriad successes, SFBU understands there is plenty of room for growth. The truncated self-study process and development of the institutional report, beginning in earnest in the fall of 2024, has illuminated areas for improvement related to advising, information sharing, campus facilities, program curricula, and institutional effectiveness. Academic and co-curricular assessment processes are only now beginning to scale in-line with institutional changes after spring 2023, and faculty and staff require training to align on process and cultivate results. SFBU's new teaching framework – the PERS model – asks faculty to deliver content in new, engaging ways and requires diligent training in order to create consistency across all programs and courses. These institutional changes are further contextualized by a rapidly evolving federal landscape of higher education, immigration changes that have significant implications for our international and domestic student population in the Bay Area, and a workforce that is only beginning to understand the potential impact of AI and emerging technologies. SFBU's challenge to higher education is that our institutions can work differently and better serve students, and we are committed to growing sustainably and responsibly.

SFBU's comprehensive quality assurance mechanisms and dedication to open and transparent communication between community members underscore the institution's commitment to continuous improvement, systematically utilizing institutional research and data analytics to inform strategic decisions and drive institutional effectiveness. This reflective, evidence-based culture positions SFBU not only to respond adeptly to immediate challenges but also to anticipate and navigate future educational demands. Overall, this analysis indicates that SFBU is well-equipped to sustain and amplify its growth trajectory, driven by clearly articulated strategic priorities and a robust institutional capacity for innovation and adaptability.