1. Describe how resources are aligned with the campus strategic plan, which includes Engagement, Service, and the Public Good; Welcoming and Inclusive Campus; Student Success; and Academic Distinction.

Over 80% of the Academic Affairs General Fund is committed to faculty and staff salaries, leaving a comparatively small proportion available on an annual basis for relocation toward strategic priorities. However, when permanent faculty separate from the university, that funding is recouped and reallocated in line with the areas of greatest strategic need. Human resources are our most critical assets we can leverage toward the University’s strategic priorities.

The Division of Academic Affairs is integral to all aspects of the campus strategic plan. Academic Affairs is responsible for the development of distinctive academic programs and delivery of instruction to Cal State LA students through the University Library and eight colleges: College of Arts & Letters; College of Business and Economics; Charter College of Education, College of Engineering, Computer Science and Technology; Rongxiang Xu College of Health and Human Services; College of Natural and Social Sciences; College of Professional and Global Education; and the Honors College. The Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Graduate Studies support the development, improvement, and maintenance of strong academic programs and related policies across all colleges.

In addition, the Division supports a comprehensive and enriching learning experience for students through other units: the Office of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities and the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning, which provide support for the teacher-scholar model for faculty and students; and the Center for Engagement Service, and the Public Good, which cultivates community partnerships to enable students and employees of Cal State L.A. to move from pedagogy to praxis in service of Los Angeles and Southern California.

Academic Affairs plays a central role in creating a welcoming and inclusive campus in the financial aid, registration, records, and other functions administered by Enrollment Services; in cultivating a diverse and inclusive community under the direction of the Office of Diversity and Engaged Learning; and through the efforts...
of Faculty Affairs to oversee the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of committed and effective faculty.

The Office of Budget and Planning, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness provide data and logistical leadership to ensure that the resources of the Academic Affairs are aligned with strategic priorities. The Office of the Provost oversees the entire Academic Affairs division and spearheads initiatives to increase student retention, promote student engagement and active learning, and ensure that students achieve their educational goals. The Office of the Provost works with the Divisions of Administration & Finance, University Advancement, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Services to facilitate collaborative success across campus.

2. Provide key evidence and measurements of success.

There are few metrics that span all aspects of Academic Affairs, but several are core to our mission and/or sufficiently broad in scope to encompass all of our units and initiatives:

- Tenure Track faculty hires
- 4- and 6-year graduation rates and equity gaps for historically underrepresented student
d- Average units loads
- National Survey of Student Engagement results (2 year cycle)
- Evaluations from accrediting bodies (e.g., Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission)

3. Describe program outcomes and results. Identify challenges encountered.

A record number of students were welcomed to campus in fall 2017, processed through Enrollment Services, and provided with a robust schedule of courses and accurate, timely advising by their colleges and departments. We continued to see rising average unit load for our students, which is a very promising sign of progress toward increasing our students’ timely progress toward degree. Beyond this and the other general metrics list above, there are specific metrics reflecting Academic Affairs outcomes in each of the strategic plan priority areas.

Engagement, Service, and the Public Good: This past academic year, over 13,000 Cal State LA student enrolled in courses with a civic learning component. Though this is the type of civic engagement that has the broadest impact on students, others are reached through Academic Affairs programs such as: Jump Start, in which students work with local students in low income neighborhood pre-schools; Project Rebound, which assists formerly incarcerated individuals seeking to enroll at Cal State LA; and the Faculty Fellows Program, which supports faculty scholarship that involves a reciprocal partnership with the community.

Welcoming and Inclusive Campus: Academic Affairs has dedicated resources to a range of efforts which provide students with faster and more effective support. For example, Enrollment Services has imported student photos in GET and implemented use of their preferred names in GET and EAB advising platforms. In addition, the Degree Planner has been launched to allow students to map out their academic careers by populating their multi-year schedules with courses required for their majors, and year-round Pell grants were rolled out this year, significantly increasing the numbers of student for whom summer course enrollment is within financial reach. The Office of Faculty Affairs and the Office of Diversity and Engaged Learning have worked collaboratively to encourage
recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that lead to a culturally rich and diverse body of faculty. These are but a sample of the many ways in which Academic Affairs has focused on making it a rewarding experience to work and learn at Cal State LA.

Academic Distinction: Well qualified and highly committed faculty are the core of a quality academic programs. Academic Affairs completed 34 successful tenure track faculty searches this past academic year, and has 52 searches planned for this coming fall. In addition, the Division has more augmented the $150,995 provided by the Chancellor’s Office for Research Scholarly and Creative activity to provide just over $3.5M in support of faculty research through new faculty release time and start-up funds, sabbaticals and professional development, grant development support, and ORSCA office and animal care facilities. The total external funding awards received in 2017-18 by the campus was almost $24.5 million, showing that these support services are both effective and critical in creating valued research opportunities for faculty and students.

Student Success: This aspect of the Strategic Plan has been the impetus for a range of funded initiatives within Academic Affairs. As reflected in the Graduation 2025 plan for 2017-2018 submitted to the Chancellor’s Office, we have focused on five broad areas for targeted interventions aimed at improving our graduation rates which, notably, have significant overlap with the campus’s strategic plan priority areas:

- Improving Advisement and Student Support focuses on technology-based tools for our faculty and staff to counsel students toward appropriate majors and courses; identify support services to promote students’ success in their coursework; and initiate targeted advising campaigns at critical junctures to guide students toward timely graduation. To this end, we adopted both the EAB Student Success Collaborative and the Smart Planner tools which help students map timely paths to graduation, and enable advisors to use program-specific success marker to identify at risk students as candidates for outreach and support. We have supported the hiring of Directors of Student Success and Advising in each college, and a Student Success Strategist to coordinate this team and lead our Graduation Initiative 2025 advising campaigns. Academic Affairs has invested significantly in Enrollment Services areas (Admissions, Financial Aid, and the Registrar teams) to ensure adequate staffing and promote effective business process in these critical student support areas.

- Engaged Teaching and Learning stresses the importance of strong pedagogical training for faculty and strategic use of technology to increase multimodal learning opportunities for our diverse student population. Academic Affairs has supported a wide range of CETL programming which has yielded promising dividends such as: faculty development of rigorously designed hybrid and online coursework, resulting in 476 sections scheduled AY 2017-2018. We also supported 19 faculty in CETL’s course redesign program, yielding an 8% average reduction in the Ds, F, and Ws, earned by students in those redesigned section in the following term. After a highly consultative process, we also supported the adoption of Canvas, the new learning management software that is replacing Moodle.

- Student Life and Sense of Belonging recognizes the unique challenges our students face, with our higher than CSU average proportion of first generation students and Pell-eligible students. Academic Affairs has funded the Cal State “Wise” Initiative, based on research showing the impact that brief social psychology interventions at the beginning of a students’ college career can have on the success of disadvantaged and/or minority students. Academic Affairs has developed its own web-based series of videos featuring our students revealing their challenges (cultural/family expectations, first generation concerns) and how they’ve mastered them to cultivate a sense of belonging among students. Preliminary results suggest positive effects on students’ average unit load and GPA, as well as “planned academic engagement” such as visiting faculty during office hours and using tutoring services.

- Curriculum Structure and Degree Flexibility aims at identifying and alleviating the unintended barriers that exist in our academic programs and policies. The efforts we reported last year resulted in updated and
improved road maps for every undergraduate major. We worked with several departments to eliminate hidden pre-requisites and to clearly identify directed electives. With a great deal of consultation, programs were able to offer lists of approved courses that will populate the Degree Planner making it much more efficient for students to meet requirements according to the road maps. We also increased articulation agreements by 19% in an effort to support transfer student success in accessing the courses that satisfy the major-specific admissions criteria set for this academic year. In light of the extensive delays in updating ASSIST.org, we published on our own website the course articulations for our top 25 community college feeders, listing all the major-specific courses and the articulated courses for each community college. We have also invested in new curriculum processing software to support faculty in responding to program review and in developing and enhancing degrees and courses. We have added new ADT agreements and continue to find ways to add more. Faculty are actively seeking out opportunities to improve lower division coursework for better transferability and improved pathways for both freshman and transfer student success.

- Finally, the Enrollment Management and Data Capabilities theme recognizes the importance of providing user-friendly data tools to faculty and staff that build knowledge of key student success metrics and promote course schedules that meet the needs of our students. Academic Affairs has provided additional staffing to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, including the new Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, and has supported a strategic planning process currently underway to facilitate campus stakeholder input on future priorities of this crucial unit. The Division has also dedicated resources to expand use of the Ad Astra tool to facilitate efficient course scheduling. These tools have yielded insights that have informed new scheduling guidelines and practices for Colleges. Moreover, in AY 2017-2018, these tools guided our funding of an additional 242 sections of high-demand course in line with demonstrated student need and significant reductions in course waitlists.

Academic Affairs face several significant challenges in aligning its resource with strategic priorities. First, the lack of position management on campus creates significant challenges in assessing and tracking staffing levels and needs. Second, the lack of resource management tools, to aid in forecasting and a schedule of classes planning linked to financial data, make it challenging to have accurate budget information guiding real-time decision making. Finally, the timing and restrictions of general fund resources provided as “one time dollars” inhibit long term strategic planning and investment. The Division’s year-end budget reports documented carry forward funds earmarked for specific strategic priorities, including faculty professional development and research support in the Colleges, and classroom and student space renovations in central Academic Affairs. Despite ample underfunded strategic priorities, Academic Affairs has carried forward significant funds this year. There are several reasons for this:

- We were awarded a large sum of Grad 2025 recurring funding in 2017. Almost $3M of it was allocated to a multi-year TT hiring plan that will conclude with fall 2019 new hires. Salary savings during the two recruitment cycles contributed to the carry forward. If the majority of current TT recruitments underway are successful, we will have expended these funds by 2019-20.
- The bulk of our carry forward results from Excess Enrollment and Non-Resident funding (primarily the former). Currently, those funds are not disbursed until the end of the AY. While most of it covers faculty salaries for those teaching the additional courses, most of the colleges have funds remaining due to scheduling efficiencies. We are encouraging these efficiencies as they generate funds for colleges and Academic Affairs to support other strategic initiatives (faculty research, student support, innovation, facilities improvements, etc.). Currently, though, AA and the colleges receive the funds too late in the year to expend them and must plan on the spending them the following year on operational priorities. This also includes the excess enrollment funds that are awarded to the University Library, Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies.
- This year, in particular, we were cautious about expending carry over as the university continued to face a
benefits deficit that we were told might need to be funded from Excess Enrollments. As this year’s RAAC process has addressed the deficit, we will be able to expend more next year -- particularly, if we can work with A&F to expand classroom improvement project.

- AAF has been strategically reinvesting carryover in key areas such as Library improvements and improvements in classrooms and informal learning spaces. This past year, we worked with facilities to support improvements to 66 classrooms. We have many classroom projects yet to do, and we also need to get to work on building out a Center for Academic Support in the Library. While we have reserved several million dollars of funding for these projects, we have to align our work with available bandwidth in Admin & Finance who are currently managing a lengthy list of university projects.

- We do not have position management, so it is impossible to get exact figures on this, but at any given time, we may have 10% of staff lines vacant. Assuming a $60K average salary and an average vacancy of 9 months, we will carry forward almost $2M just in salary savings alone.

- Two fixed costs are embedded in the “carryover”—funds to cover Faculty Development and funds to cover July/August salaries of previous AY salaried Faculty. These are not really carryforward and perhaps could be designated differently.