

Plan for Excellence III  
Strategic Plan Report 2006-2011  
Goal 2: Promoting the Success of all Students

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**PART II: STUDENT SUCCESS TASK FORCE UPDATE**

For the past eight years, Student Success has been a visible priority on the campus with the creation of the Student Success Task Force in 2002. There have been numerous initiatives undertaken to increase retention and improve graduation rates. Recently, the Chancellor's Office charged all CSU Presidents with undertaking new initiatives to increase graduation rates significantly over the next six years. This section of our Goal 2 report will highlight both the ongoing initiatives undertaken by the Student Success Task Force since 2002 as well as more recent initiatives to respond to the Chancellor's Office charge.

**INSTITUTIONALIZED INITIATIVES**

- *Mandatory Orientation*

The enrollment confirmation process for first-time freshmen was linked with registration for new student orientation last year. This made new student orientation mandatory for first-time freshmen and it remained highly encouraged for transfer students. Over **97%** of incoming freshmen students and **85%** of transfer students had an orientation experience prior to enrollment.

- *Academic Roadmaps*

The campus was nearing a staged implementation of the degree completion planner (DCP) when the vendor went out of business transferring their interest to another company. CIS negotiated with the new company and we will begin in Fall 2010 working to complete the degree completion planner program. Rollout will be no earlier than Spring 2011.

- *Minimizing Program Requirements Over 120 Credits*

The GE committee raised the possibility of reducing the GE package to 48 units. There was pushback from faculty and students. No action was taken. Our Engineering dean is working with other CSU deans on the feasibility of reducing units in engineering programs.

- *Mandatory Choice of Major by 60th Credit and Mandatory Advising at the 75th Credit*

Declarations of a major by 60 units and mandatory major academic advising prior to the completion of 75 units have been smoothly integrated into campus practice and have been fully and effectively implemented for the past three years.

- *Learning Communities*

Learning Communities have been implemented successfully over the past 2 years and there has been an expansion of the Learning Communities concept in the follow ways:

- 3 major efforts were undertaken during the past year to enhance our Learning Communities Program and involved creating 42 sections of 14 courses taught by 40 faculty and a total of 699 students.
- A Residence Hall Learning Community was launched with students living on the same floor and enrolling in 2 concurrent courses. Preliminary results suggest these Fall courses may not have been a good selection for the first semester freshmen.
- Additional Learning Communities in Dance 160 and IAS 108 (Liberal Studies Program), as well as Health Science 100 and Health Science 135 were offered – both designed to assist students within their major – results of this enhancement are not available at this time.
- Faculty implemented a “first year experience” learning community this year with 50 students; 100 students will be selected for this community for next Fall.

### RECENT INITIATIVES

- *Academic Checklist/Student Job Description*

- A subcommittee of the Student Success Task Force drafted a student job description which outlines expectations for degree completion at Fresno State. In addition, a checklist was developed which provides detailed steps on how students can be successful in five phases of their college careers: (1) After You Have Been Accepted, Before Classes Start, (2) Your First Year At Fresno State, (3) Your Second Year At Fresno State, (4) An Upper Division Student At Fresno State, and (5) The Year Before Graduation From Fresno State. Each of the five sections includes checklist items in three areas: Academic Success, Belonging and Navigating. The Division of Student Affairs provided funding to print 6000 copies which were distributed to students admitted for fall 2009 through Dog Days and other freshman orientation programs (Smittcamp Honors Program, International Students and Services, and Athletics). An online copy is posted on the web site of the Office of Advising Services.

The job description and checklist are currently being evaluated through surveys given to:

- Students enrolled in an academic success class for those on academic disqualification from their fall 2009 grades
  - Students who participated in Dog Days (online survey)
  - All transfer students from fall 2009 (online survey)
- Focus groups are also being conducted with special population students as well as those who represent the average Fresno State freshman.

- *Study Time Expectations*

Student Success Task Force (SSTF) members recognized the need for Fresno State students to spend more time studying outside of class in order to be successful. A subcommittee of

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the SSTF developed a poster campaign to help students identify and establish good study habits. The Division of Student Affairs paid for printing 250 posters (11 x 17") which were hung throughout the campus at the beginning of the fall 2009 semester. Entitled "Train Your Brain", the posters feature an athlete and highlight similarities between physical and mental workouts. Poster content includes: (1) *Set a regular workout schedule (i.e., outside study time)*, (2) *Learn to use your time efficiently (good study habits)*, and (3) *Do it!*

Posters were also distributed at the SSTF and Campus Advisors Network (CAN) meetings. Announcements of the campaign were made at the Academic Senate and Department Chairs meetings to encourage campaign support from faculty advisors. A presentation was made for faculty in October 2009 at a program sponsored by the Center for the Scholarly Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CSALT). Entitled "Raise the Bar: Ideas for Engaging Students Outside of Class and Holding Student Accountable for Work Outside of Class", the presentation was later posted on the CSALT website.

- *SupportNet*

SupportNet is an early warning program that provides academic intervention to struggling students in targeted classes. The current economic crisis has had an adverse effect on the SupportNet program. The full time advisor position vacancy was not filled until late in the semester (Nov. 16, 2009) and the number of referrals from English was significantly reduced because of faculty turn over. Despite these setbacks, the program made progress as noted below:

- Collaborated with the Kremen School of Education to develop a SupportNet internship program. We have secured internships with 3 graduate students who are committed to work between 160 - 600 volunteer hours.
- Fall 2009: 80% of referred students contacted made an appointment to see a SupportNet adviser (with an 80% show rate); 62% of all referrals were freshmen or sophomores.
- Spring 2010: Provided outreach and academic support as part of the Graduation Plan to freshmen with a fall 2009 GPA of .5 or below. Of the 70 students in this range, 64% of them have met with an advisor or scheduled an appointment.
- Added the top 10 classes with a high-enrollment of FTF Fall 2009 cohort to the SupportNet referral system.

SupportNet is currently working with CIS to develop a more efficient option for faculty teaching large classes to make group referrals and to improve the tracking of students in PeopleSoft.

- *Supplemental Instruction*

An analysis of student performance data continues to substantiate the effectiveness of SI as an academic support system in high failure rate classes. A recent report from IRAP indicated that Supplemental Instruction increases participants' course grade even adjusting for self-selection and controlling for other demographic factors. In addition, data continues to show:

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- Students who consistently attended SI sessions continued to achieve a higher mean final course grade than those who do not attend (spring 2009: 1.98 vs. 2.72; fall 2009: 2.10 vs. 2.74\*).

\*Note: The fall 2009 GPA comparison is reflective of those students who attended SI sessions three or more times, and the spring 2009 GPA comparison is reflective of those students who attended SI sessions at least one time.

- The number of students who received a grade of “D” or “F” or withdrew from the course was lower for students who attended SI than those for who did not (Spring 2009: 24% vs. 36%; Fall 2009: 9% vs. 31%).

The program continues to expand and specifically target courses that consistently appear on the Historically Difficult Course list (four out of six semesters). Spring 2010 courses include: Biology 1A, Biology 20, Chemistry 1A, Computer Science 1, Math 75(6 sections), Math 76, Math 77 (2 sections), Physics 2A, Physics 4A.

### **NEW GRADUATION PLAN STRATEGIES**

In response to the system “Raising Overall Achievement and Closing Gaps: Delivering the Access to Excellence Goals” project, the campus extends the efforts undertaken in support of this strategic plan element. We have developed a plan that lays out a strategy to raise the six year graduation rate for the first time full time freshmen and for transfer students by 6 points by 2015. It will also halve the graduation gap between under-represented minorities and other by increasing the graduation rate of under-represented minorities by 8 percentage points. The plan was developed by the Student Success Task Force (SSTF) co-chaired by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Affairs. The task force has been in existence for 7 years and includes faculty, staff, students, and administrators. This group also serves as the delivery team.

Goals: By 2015, raise the 6 year graduation rate

1. For first time full time freshmen to 51%;
2. For under-represented minority (URM) first time full time freshmen to 46%;
3. For transfer students to 75%;
4. For under-represented minority transfer students to 73%.

Increasing graduation rates can be done by:

1. Increasing college readiness
2. Improving student performance
3. Reducing distractions and increasing student focus on finishing
4. Providing students with assistance to overcome obstacles
5. Ensuring courses are offered in a timely fashion
6. Reducing time to degree

PRIMARY INITIATIVE

- *Academic Success Course*

178 first time full time freshmen had a GPA of between .5 and 1.5 after Fall 2009. These students were invited to enroll in a one unit academic success course (Univ 20T) in spring 2010. 149 did so. These students will identify the reasons for their poor academic performance, develop and implement a time management plan, complete an information competency component, learn about and utilize several campus resources, participate in a study skills workshop, a stress management workshop, and meet with an academic advisor among other things.

- *Earlier Freshmen Advising*

All first-time freshmen starting with the fall 2009 cohort are now required to have an advising session with a major or staff advisor prior to registration for their third semester. Students in the fall 2009 cohort had a registration hold placed on their PeopleSoft records after Census on **February 19, 2010**. They may not register for classes on their scheduled priority date and time (on or before **April 30th**) unless they have met this requirement. All remaining holds will be automatically lifted on the last day of the spring 2010 semester. Advising sessions may be conducted by major, special program, or Advising Services advisors.

Advising Services created a plan to advise freshmen in good academic standing in large groups (except for those in colleges, schools and special programs who preferred to advise their own students). Twelve of these large group sessions are scheduled in venues that can accommodate from 100 to 500 students at a time. The first four advising sessions were completed during the week of **February 22, 2010** with approximately 160 total students in attendance. The final three sessions will take place on April 20th.

Freshmen who are not in good academic standing (i.e., Probation or Disqualified-Readmitted standing) are required to complete specific interventions designed for them, depending on their current grade point average.

- Probation students (1.50-1.99 GPA) – attend a special Maximizing Academic Potential workshop
- Disqualified-Readmitted students (0.50-1.49 GPA)- take the Academic Success Course (U20)
- Disqual-Readmitted (0.00-0.49 GPA)-contact SupportNet for assessment and an individually tailored success plan

- *Super Seniors*

The concept of students with over 120 units were reviewed and the Evaluations Office identified 697 who appeared to be eligible or close to being eligible to graduate December 2009. 294 had not applied. These students were asked to meet with their advisors prior to registering for Spring 2010. During the spring 2010 semester, this list was revisited and 56

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students were asked to complete a plan for graduation before they will be allowed to register for another semester. If they do not meet with an advisor and are eligible to graduate, their degree will be awarded over the summer. An additional 59 students who have completed more than 150 units were also asked to complete graduation plans prior to being allowed to register for Fall 2010. We are developing a plan and protocol that will require all students with 140 credits or more to develop a graduation plan before they can register for the following semester.

- *Mentoring*

The Mentoring Institute matches trained, volunteer mentors (faculty, staff, and students) with identified students. Mentoring is voluntary and involves mentors providing a supportive and caring relationship; not one of formal advising or teaching to their mentee. Mentors will be encouraged to make contact each week through face-to-face contact, email, texting, phone calls or other social media. We believe this type of mentoring will provide a safety net for students that will increase retention - and eventually their graduation

To address this graduation initiative, we will be focusing services to students identified in their freshman year. Fulltime-first time freshman who's GPA fell between 2.0 and 2.49 are found to graduate at a rate of only 30%. The students who earned a 2.0 – 2.49 in fall 2009 will be offered a Mentor that will meet with them in late spring 2010, make contact across the summer, and continue with them through their sophomore year. The Mentors may be from their major department or a general assignment and the training will be online. Incentives for student involvement are being provided registration windows at the start of their groups' time slots, if they meet with a mentor.

- *Undergraduate Research Emphasis*

The Provost funded forty four \$1000 research awards for undergraduate students. Sixty nine students submitted a proposal with a faculty mentor in December. Review teams identified the 44 most promising and these were notified in January. Funds were transferred to departments. Students are to complete their research by May (with a few continuing into the summer). More information is available online at <http://www.csufresno.edu/academics/offices/undergraduate/research.shtml>

- *Student Engagement/REACT*

REACT stands for resilient, engaged, advised, connected and tutored. The student members of the SSTF are working on posters challenging students to ask themselves if they are doing these thing and providing students information on where to find resources to be able to do these things. The REACT campaign is designed to help students see the importance of HELPING THEMSELVES graduate – we want students to take responsibility for their own education. The posters will be finished in the near future. We intend to put them around campus (USU, Joyal, Library) and in the free notebooks incoming Freshman receive from ASI. When the REACT campaign is finalized, we would like to move on to working on ways students can get more directly involved in helping themselves and their peers graduate. The student members of the SSTF will be very instrumental in personalizing our efforts to improve graduation rates.

**NEXT STEPS**

A. *Develop Plan to Close the Achievement Gap*

One of the goals of the graduation plan initiative is to increase graduation rates for multi-cultural groups – especially African-American and Latino groups – so they more closely parallel Caucasian 6-year graduation rates. The Student Success Task Force is in the process of developing strategies to accomplish this goal. At the onset, we are doing more in-depth analysis to determine pre-existing factors within these populations that place them more at risk to complete their degree. In addition, we believe that the rejuvenation of our Mentoring Program will provide an important connection between our African American students and Latinos students and campus faculty and staff. That safety net has proven effective on other campuses to improve retention rate and graduation rates for multicultural student groups. We will also solicit the involvement of African-American and Latino faculty and staff, not only in the Mentoring Program, but also in other ways to make connections with these student cohorts. We will have a formal plan in place for the 2010-2011 academic year and it will focus on sophomore students in the Fall 2009 cohort.

B. *Transfer Student Graduation Rates*

A third component of the Graduation Rate Plan is to improve transfer graduation rates; specifically, to increase the 3 year and 4 year (translate 5 year – 6 year) graduation rates for incoming transfer students. Because we are only accepting upper-division transfers, the first class to be tracked within our 2009-2015, 6 year window will enter in Fall 2011. The Campus Delivery Team – in conjunction with the Student Success Task Force – will develop the Transfer Graduation Plan during the 2010-2011 academic year. We will approach it in a manner similar to the plan noted above, to include looking at individual factors and pre-existing conditions for upper-division transfers. We will identify campus program/services that are able to assist in supporting transfer students. We will have one year of experience with the rejuvenated Mentoring Program by Fall 2011 that will give us a sense of how the Mentoring Program may assist us with transfer students' persistence to degree completion.

C. *DCP/uDirect*

Degree Completion Planner Project – Degree Completion Planning is the collaborative process for students and advisors to work jointly to build student multi-term course plans to complete degree requirements using Academic Roadmaps as a guide. The Degree Completion Planner (DCP) system facilitates this process by providing functions to:

1. Allow staff to build and publish Academic Roadmaps
2. Allow students to create multiple course plans for review and approval
3. Utilize Degree Progress Reporting (a.k.a. DARS) to validate that both roadmaps and student plans meet degree requirements
4. Allow advisors to review and approve student course plans

After the departure our DCP consultant, the Degree Completion Planner has regained momentum in the targeted delivery of a robust student and advisor planning tool for efficient and effective attainment of undergraduate degrees. The installation of the uDirect product from redLantern (formerly Miami University of Ohio) has been completed and is in process

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of being configured to match the prior implementation of the DCP product from IMS. The Academic Roadmaps that were created for Craig School of Business and Lyles College of Engineering have been migrated to the new system and are in process of being validated.

The next steps of the project include identifying any gaps functionality of the new product that are required for deployment to campus and working with the vendor to address these needs. The team will be testing of the new system starting in late April and progress through the summer. We are targeting to have the system available for student and advisor planning before the Spring 2011 registration cycle in November 2010. Roadmap development for additional undergraduate degrees can begin during this same time frame.

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