APPENDIX O

Facilitating Graduation Task Force
Final Report
August 14, 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January, 2005, Provost John Gemello appointed the Facilitating Graduation Task Force and charged it with making recommendations about improving the graduation rates of undergraduate students at San Francisco State University. With this report, the Facilitating Graduation Task Force completes its assignment. We have all learned much about our university and its students, and we have grown more aware of obstacles students face on the path to graduation. We hope, in this report, to bring some of these obstacles to the attention of faculty, staff, and administrators, and to support their efforts to assist undergraduate students in achieving the goal of a baccalaureate degree.

The report is divided into three sections:
- *Overview* outlines the reasons graduation is delayed for many students. Among the causes are change of major, lack of advising, failure in lower-division courses, unavailable courses in composition, GE and the major, and external financial and family pressures.
- *Task Force Activities* details some of the actions taken by the Task Force during its 18 month tenure, including a description of data gathered, meetings held, policies initiated and reports submitted. Three interim reports are attached to this document, as well as a list of possible future activities in support of facilitating graduation and a copy of the new Advising Policy.
- *Conclusions and Recommendations* contains the Task Force recommendations, including recommendations for increasing the variety and frequency of student advising, suggestions for improving the responsiveness of course scheduling to student demand and some ideas for areas of future research. We propose that the Advising Center oversee all undergraduate advising and that the Enrollment Management Committee review enrollment statistics annually with the goal of identifying curricular roadblocks to graduation.

This report emphasizes what students told us whenever we met with them: students want to graduate. The movement to facilitate graduation is not in any way an effort to push students out before they ready. On the contrary, students want more advising and more

essential courses offered at a greater variety of times. They look to the faculty, staff and administration of the University to support their goal of earning a baccalaureate degree.

INTRODUCTION

In January, 2005, Provost John Gemello appointed the Facilitating Graduation Task Force and charged it with making recommendations about improving the graduation rates of undergraduate students at San Francisco State University. With this report, the Facilitating Graduation Task Force completes its assignment. We have all learned much about our university and its students, and we have grown more aware of obstacles students face on the path to graduation. We hope, in this report, to bring some of these obstacles to the attention of faculty, staff, and administrators, and to support their efforts to assist undergraduate students in achieving the goal of a baccalaureate degree.

Attached to this report are several interim documents produced by the Task Force, a list of possible future actions and the revision to the Senate policy on advising initiated by the Task Force:

- Facilitating Graduation Task Force Recommendations as of 3/30/05
- Facilitating Graduation Task Force Progress Report October 2005
- Response to AA-2005-21 with timeline
- List of possible future actions to facilitate graduation
- 2006 Academic Senate Advising Policy (S06-191)

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OVERVIEW

Three criteria are used to measure student progress to graduation: (1) do students persist to graduation; (2) do students graduate without excess units; and (3) do students graduate in four years or six years or within some other standardized time limit? We have collected information about why some students graduate with excess units or take longer than might be desired to earn the units required for graduation. We have gathered this information from studies of course enrollment and grading patterns, from information about major requirements learned from studying departmental roadmaps, and from interviews and meetings with students themselves. We have also drawn on the expertise of the members of the Task Force who have many years experience in student advising.

Causes of Graduation Delays

The academically-related reasons that students delay graduating fall mostly into three categories: changes in major, lack of progress through required courses, and misinformed choice of courses. Other reasons are personal and over which we have little or no direct influence, such as financial pressures and family obligations.

Change of Major

Students who change their major often take extra time to graduate, but that is their choice and is commonplace at most Universities. Although the Task Force understands that it may be necessary to limit the opportunities for students to change their study plans, our focus has been on helping students graduate when they are ready.

Key Courses Not Completed

Students fail to progress through required courses either because they enroll in them and do not pass or because the courses are not available. In **Data From University Records** we discuss a preliminary study of classes with high failure rates. A large number of students are affected, and it might be productive to find ways of improving student performance at critical points, particularly at the lower division level.

Courses are unavailable to students when there are not enough seats or when the courses are offered at times inconvenient for students. We have some indications that sufficient seats may not be available in a few key classes, but for many students the problem is finding classes at times when they can take them. Work and family schedules can prevent students from taking classes where space is available.

Errors in Course Selection

Finally, we have found that some students make mistakes in planning their programs, and therefore require extra semesters to graduate. The Registrar publishes a list of the Ten Top Reasons for Not Graduating, based on rejected petitions for graduation. Students we interviewed spoke of their reluctance to seek advising from faculty. Many named the Bulletin or friends as their chief source of academic information. Efforts are underway to improve student advising, including the future Graduation Planner and a revised Advising Policy passed by the Academic Senate this spring. Some departments have begun to require advising through the use of advising holds on registration.

Culture of Graduation

In sum, we believe that the best way to improve graduation rates is to improve the student experience at SFSU. If the University can improve student access to curriculum and advising, students will have a better academic experience and average time to graduation will decrease. One aim of the Task Force has been to create a "culture of graduation" across campus, to focus the efforts of faculty, staff, administrators and the students themselves in support of the goal of timely completion of degrees. It may seem paradoxical, but we think that satisfied students graduate sooner. In preliminary faculty discussions about graduation rates, some have said that efforts to facilitate graduation are attempts to force students to graduate before they are prepared. Exactly the opposite is the case. Among all the students we interviewed, none wanted to delay their graduation. The common complaint was that the University did not support them sufficiently in their efforts to complete their degrees.

TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

Information Gathered

A major part of the work of the Task Force was collecting information about student progress to the baccalaureate degree. Information about enrollment patterns, student success (and failure) and impacted classes was gathered from University records. More anecdotal information about the reasons underlying the numbers was learned in meetings with students, faculty, department chairs and advisors.

Data From University Records

Impacted classes are a problem that needs further study. Overall, in one semester, there were 209 classes numbered 400-499 that were full. Knowing that 400-level classes are often taken by seniors, full classes at this level could indicate that some students cannot enroll in a class needed for graduation. Similarly when we monitored registration to see how quickly sections of required courses filled, we observed that typically remedial, developmental, and GE Segment I courses close in the first day or two of the registration period, leaving few opportunities for students who register later to have access to critical classes. We interviewed a small sample of summer students and found a high percentage of individuals who had been unable to enroll in a key course the previous spring.

Grading patterns also indicate isolated areas where students are delayed in their progress to the degree. Overall in one semester when 106,000 grades were assigned, 10% of grades were below C- (including NC) and an additional 3.5% of grades were W. However there are a few classes, including some that are required for popular majors, where the success rate is below 50%. We do not want to overemphasize the problem of failure, which overall is not large, and we certainly do not want to suggest that academic standards should be lowered. Rather, where failure is a problem, faculty might want to

consider implementing additional support systems or preparatory classes for students who could benefit from them.

Other reports gathered by the Task Force related to availability of space in GE classes. There were some areas where space was consistently unavailable. We will say more about this topic in the section on recommendations.

Early in our process we examined some transcripts for students with a high number of units and we received a report of which majors had the largest number of students with more than 120 units. The results were not surprising. Programs with the highest unit requirements for the most part had the largest number of high-unit students. Admission to impacted majors sometimes delayed students' graduation and meant that students who waited a year or more for admission perforce graduated with excess units because they continued as full-time students taking courses that were not required for the degree. When required courses are not available, students sometimes report taking courses almost at random to maintain enrollment status for dormitory occupancy and financial aid. This practice can lead to excess units at graduation.

Data Gathered From Students

The Task Force surveyed students in several ways. We met with groups of summer school students in June 2005, and we participated in the Campus-wide Summit on Facilitating Graduation held April 12, 2006 which was sponsored by Associated Students' Project Connect. Finally, we posted questions on the Pulse Survey carried out during registration for Fall 2005. The results of the Pulse survey confirmed the more anecdotal impressions provided by the students we spoke to directly. The following are some key results from the survey:

1. Three questions about advising produced somewhat contradictory results. Asked about their most important advising source, only 26% of students report getting advice from faculty. Of the rest, 28% get advice from staff and 46% use printed and web materials including DARS exclusively. On a related question, 22% of students report getting help choosing classes from a staff advisor, 16% from a faculty advisor and the remainder get assistance from friends and family (13%) or make their own choices (49%). These figures do not quite fit with those from a third question: 36% of students report that the availability of their faculty advisor is "good" or "excellent", while only 28% report not having a faculty advisor. The disparity in these results could be explained by the fact that different students answered different questions, so the students responding to one question are not the same as those responding to another. Nevertheless, the disparity in results is surprising given the large number of students who responded, about 3400 to each question.
2. Students were asked how often they should be required to meet with a faculty advisor. A remarkable 27% said more than once a semester, while only 25% said less than once a year or never.

3. When asked about improving class availability, 39% of respondents wanted more classes in summer and winter; 26% wanted more sections of required classes and 21% wanted classes offered every semester.
4. The classes that most delayed student graduation were GE Segment II classes (29%), followed closely by GE Segment III classes (23%). GE Segment I classes and major classes caused problems for fewer students, and 12% of students report having no problem finding courses needed to progress to graduation.
5. A minority (29%) of students reported that no external factors were slowing their progress to the degree, but 32% reported that their progress was inhibited by their need to work. Other factors (family care, indecision about major, taking time off) appeared with much less frequency. Almost two-thirds of students report working 20 hours a week or more.

Roadmaps and Graduation Planner

A major activity of the Task Force this spring has been collecting and editing "roadmaps": ideal graduation plans showing how a student can achieve a Bachelor's degree in four years of study. Each program has been asked to produce a roadmap, and most are completed. In a handful of cases the creation of the roadmap showed programs how difficult it was to complete their degree. In most cases these programs have told us that they plan to reconsider their requirements.

The roadmaps are intended to complement other advising tools. Eventually they will be combined with the Graduation Planner, another initiative started by the Task Force and in the process of completion by Enrollment Services. The Planner will be an on-line form for students to select all the classes they need to graduate and to plan when to take them. Advisors can assist students in filling out their planner, and the DARS system will check its validity. Every semester all student Planners will be scanned to create a demand prediction for courses in the next semester. Predicted demand will be provided to colleges and programs to help them design their schedules.

Advising

The Task Force initiated a revised Advising Policy for the campus that mandates student advising at five pivotal points: entering the university, choosing a major, reaching upper-division status, preparing to graduate and experiencing academic difficulty. This policy was adopted by the Academic Senate in April 2006.

General Education and Other All-University Requirements

The Task Force supported an initiative adopted by the Academic Senate for a far-reaching study and possible modification of the All-University Requirements, including General Education, Composition and US History and Government. It is planned that

external reviewers will study the SFSU programs and make recommendations to a campus committee that will, in turn, make recommendations to the Academic Senate.

CSU Report and Peer Review

During Fall Semester, 2005, all CSU campuses were required to respond to AA-2005-21, a request for information about campus actions to facilitate graduation. The Task Force drafted the SFSU response, which was delivered in December, 2005, and is attached to this report. On May 11, 2006, SFSU was visited by a faculty peer review team appointed by the Chancellor's Office to makes recommendations to the campus to improve graduation rates. The Task Force took the lead in planning the visit and hosting the visitors. Here is a much condensed version of the team's recommendations:

1. Proposed revisions to developmental and lower-division composition should be adopted, because they appear effective and may relieve some of the bottleneck in composition.
2. Overall, students need much more advising, and perhaps more advising should be required. New students, both lower-division and upper-division, are especially in need of advising. This might be done through orientation, individual advising, expanded learning communities and tutoring. At present, more of these services are provided to freshman than to upper-division transfers. Students further along need guidance in their majors. Students on probation need a simpler advising process.
3. Faculty advisors need more training and rewards.

Reports Prepared

In the eighteen months the Task Force has met, it has produced three reports, which are attached. The Progress Report of October 2005 includes a number of recommendations which we still believe are valid. Most of the recommendations concerning advising, roadmaps and course planners have been implemented or will soon be implemented. The Response to AA-2005-21 is a more extensive document that describes the present situation in detail and proposes some actions for the future. The Response and the Progress Report for October, 2005, largely overlap in their recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From its inception, the Task Force has seen its role as helping students to achieve their goals of completing their undergraduate education and graduating in a timely fashion. We can report that most of the reasons students do not graduate in a timely fashion are more frustrating to the students than to anyone else. Whenever we identified some roadblock to graduation in the data, we found a corresponding complaint in the student interviews.

Based on our experience, we recommend some actions that we believe will assist students in graduating, we suggest who should be responsible for those actions, and we recommend further areas of study that could lead to additional recommendations.

Advising

Many of the difficulties encountered by students are related to the advising process. Although students say they want more advising, it seems that they want to be required to see advisors. Too many students fail to seek advising voluntarily. The revised Advising Policy recently adopted by the Academic Senate (attached) is a good start, but it must be extended in two ways. First of all, mechanisms must be developed to enforce advising at the five pivotal points. Second, more intensive and more frequent advising would benefit many students.

Major Advising

Most departments that use annual mandatory advising enforced by advising holds report satisfaction with the results. Some large departments would find this system impractical, but many smaller departments with a manageable student/faculty ratio could use advising holds to enforce mandatory advising.

Some larger units, both departments and colleges, effectively use staff advisors and student peer advisors to complement faculty for major advising. These units have created Student Resource Centers where students know that they can always find help.

There are majors that admit students only after successful completion of prerequisites. Students attempting to gain entrance to one of these programs might benefit from advising from a program advisor. It could be helpful if students could sign up as a pre-major or through some other mechanism avail themselves of a program advisor. Their preparation for the program might be better informed and more focused.

Intervention Advising

Students who would benefit most from more frequent advising are probably those headed for academic difficulties, e.g. those who appear to consistently withdraw from classes or are barely in good standing. It is not necessary to wait for a student to go on probation to realize that the student needs intervention. Lower-division students and new transfers should be encouraged to see an advisor whenever they receive a grade of D, F or WU or two W's in a semester.

Frequent Communication with Students

The Task Force supports increasing the quality and amount of communication with students. To that end, task force members have worked closely with Enrollment Planning and Management and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to develop and send messages to students at critical points in their education (e.g., at the end of the first year of college). Identifying additional key times (e.g. at the end of the second and third years) and creating appropriate communications will tell students that the University is concerned about their progress and help them avoid common mistakes in course selection.

The individual responsible for assuring the creation and regular distribution of useful information to students should be the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with the Registrar, the AVP for Enrollment Planning and Management, the Director of the Advising Center and perhaps the Department Chairs group.

Choosing a Major

An issue closely related to advising is the timing of the choice of a major. The Task Force supports the principal that students should be required to choose a major in time to graduate without excess units. Except when necessary to enforce that deadline, we see little utility in requiring all students to choose majors in their first two years or prior to transferring to SFSU. For every student who graduates sooner because of choosing a major early, there may be another who graduates later because their initial choice just delayed their entry into the major they finally selected.

Single-Source Advising

The Task Force has heard students complain that faculty advisors do not provide information about all-university requirements. Faculty advisors sometimes refer students to the Advising Center for this information. Students believe that they should be able to receive advising about their major and about all-university requirements from one reliable source, an expectation with which the Task Force concurs. Increased training for faculty advisors about all-university requirements could ameliorate this problem.

One way to train faculty advisors is through annual advisor meetings hosted by the Advising Center. Such meetings would also increase much needed communication between faculty advisors in the colleges and professional staff advisors in the Advising Center. Additional communication will provide more information about university requirements to faculty advisors and keep the staff advisors aware of requirements in the many majors students eventually follow.

Advising is a faculty responsibility that is not shared equally. Faculty who do extensive advising should be rewarded appropriately with credit for service and even assigned time.

Beginning students often receive both GE and introductory major advising from professional staff advisors, Additional training for staff advisors in preliminary major

advising could be helpful. Staff Advisors on campus already provide a level of major advising and a system for training to support that could be explored.

Roadmaps

The final piece of the advising picture is the roadmaps. Almost all programs have completed their roadmaps, and those that have not should do so soon. As valuable as the roadmaps are for students majoring in the various programs, they may be equally valuable for undeclared students and the professional advising staff across campus who assist them. The roadmaps make it possible for someone without detailed knowledge of a program to make wise choices to prepare for entering the program.

Expanded Role for Advising Center

Responsibility for assuring the quality of advising across campus rests in many hands. Department and program chairs monitor the quality of faculty advising in their programs, but the one individual most aware of advising issues is the Director of the Advising Center. During the tenure of the Task Force, the Advising Center worked with the department and program chairs to create a list of faculty advisors. A packet describing all-university graduation requirements was sent to all advisors. We concur with the recently-passed revision to the Academic Senate Advising Policy (S06-191) in recommending that the Advising Center be seen as the central point for university advising issues. In particular, the Advising Director and his staff should be given responsibility for:

1. Working with the department chairs to maintain a list of faculty undergraduate advisors.
2. Holding one or two meetings annually with the faculty undergraduate advisors.
3. Encouraging faculty undergraduate advisors to be a single point of advising for both major and all-university requirements.
4. Meeting annually with the department chairs group.
5. Recommending advising policy changes to the Academic Senate as needed.
6. Assisting the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to issue an annual report on the state of advising on campus.

Academic Programs

The best advising will not help students graduate unless the recommended courses are available. Only 12% of students report never having a problem enrolling in desired classes. When it comes to scheduling classes, the operative principle should be: no bottlenecks. Departments should be encouraged to report persistently over-enrolled classes, and there should be backup mechanisms at the college and university levels to identify required classes that are over-subscribed. Perhaps over-enrolled classes should require justification at the departmental level as is now required for under-enrolled

classes. Without conscious attention to the problem, it is easy for curricular bottlenecks to remain unobserved and uncorrected.

On-Line Graduation Planner

The on-line Graduation Planner scheduled for completion in Fall 2006 will deliver information to programs and departments about expected course demand. This information could be a valuable estimator of course enrollments, provided students keep their Graduation Planners up-to-date. If accurate information is available, class schedules may be more in line with student demand than they presently are. The utility of this system will depend on students and their advisors maintaining up-to-date graduation plans, and maintaining graduation plans will depend on frequent advising. It is clear from the process of developing roadmaps that the ideal is far from the current reality – many programs recommend high demand courses for students' sophomore and junior years that are currently filled by seniors. For the Graduation Planner and mandatory advising to work and for students to be able to graduate when they plan, the campus needs to insure that students have access to the courses that they need in the semester that they are advised and plan to take them.

Curricular Roadblocks

The Task Force supported the external review of All-University Requirements because students reported that Segment II and Segment III classes were frequent roadblocks to their progress. Without prejudging what may be a long faculty debate about these requirements, we encourage the faculty to remember that course availability should be seen as an important component of a successful program. Students should be able to find required courses at a variety of times each semester, and no student should be delayed in achieving a degree because a General Education requirement or other all university required course was not offered one semester or not offered in sufficient numbers to satisfy student demand.

Task Force members saw evidence of and heard repeatedly from students about the difficulty they had enrolling into required written composition courses at all levels. Given the importance of written proficiency to the mission and strategic plan of the university, this issue should be addressed as soon as possible. Proposed changes to upper-division writing requirements cannot be implemented without insuring that students have timely access to appropriate lower division composition courses. SFSU should guarantee access to ENG 114 for all first-year students who are not in developmental courses and to second year composition courses in all students' second year.

Expanded Role for the Enrollment Management Committee

The Task Force supports continuing campus efforts to communicate to colleges and departments the likely impact of changing demographics to ensure that appropriate numbers of seats are available in key courses required by our increasing number of freshmen and sophomores. Also, it is important to watch the trends in terms of major choice and address the increased need for courses in some areas before bottlenecks occur.

The Task Force recommends that the group responsible for monitoring existing and potential curricular bottlenecks should be the Enrollment Management Committee. More generally, we believe that the Enrollment Management Committee should expand its purview from admissions to include projections and recommendations regarding the progress of students to graduation. By its composition, this committee is well-equipped to review student enrollment data. The Committee should include information about student progress to graduation in its annual report, and it should notify the Dean of Undergraduate Studies about severe bottlenecks whenever they are discovered.

Annual Graduation Summit

Finally, the Task Force recommends that the Dean of Undergraduate Studies convene an annual summit to review progress towards facilitating graduation. The summit could involve the Director of Advising, AVP for Enrollment Planning and Management, Associate Deans, key Department Chairs and others. The purpose would be to collect and disseminate information about graduation rates and identify roadblocks to graduation.

Other Issues

There are two issues widely believed to inhibit student progress towards graduation for which we found little evidence. We believe that the new Director of Academic Institutional Research might consider them and report either that they are valid concerns or, once and for all, put them to rest.

Excessive Withdrawals

The first issue is withdrawals. Every few years a proposal surfaces to eliminate or severely restrict the W grade, because students who withdraw from a class are supposed to have blocked the enrollment of another student who would have completed the class. In our examination of enrollment statistics we did not find classes that were simultaneously over-subscribed and had a high withdrawal rate. Perhaps there are a few such classes, but overall we believe that a draconian withdrawal policy would harm students needing withdrawals, and we question whether such a policy would create many new opportunities for other students.

Excess Units

The second issue is students accumulating excess units. Based on limited evidence, we believe that the major cause of excess units at graduation is excess units transferred into SFSU. There may not be many students taking an excessive number of units at SFSU. We propose two research questions: (1) how many students have accumulated more than 130 units while taking more than 60 units at SFSU; and (2) how many students take a course they do not want or need each semester (and why)? A large number of affirmative answers to either of these questions would indicate a problem of excess units.

Summation

The Task Force has identified advising and curriculum planning as the two areas most likely to assist students in meeting their graduation goals. The Task Force recognizes that helping students to accomplish these goals will not come without some additional cost. Analysis and attention needs to be made as to the appropriate allocation of resources as provided for under Item 22 in Coded memorandum AA-2005-21.

We have further recommended that the Advising Center and the Enrollment Management Committee respectively disseminate information at least annually about performance in these areas. Members of the task force believe that improving how well we communicate among students, faculty, advisors, and department and program chairs is key to our creating a better system for advising, for program planning, and for creating a culture of graduation. One of SFSU's strengths is our willingness to collaborate and cooperate across disciplinary and division lines. In order to improve our culture of graduation, we need to continue and expand upon these efforts.

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FACILITATING GRADUATION
Progress Report
May 2007

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The Facilitating Graduating Task Force submitted its final report in July 2006. The report identified two primary areas that are most likely to assist students in meeting their graduation goals: advising and curriculum planning. Within each of these areas, several concrete recommendations were offered to create a "better system for advising, for program planning, and for creating a culture of graduation." This progress report summarizes the steps that have been taken during the 2006-07 academic year to improve students' ability to make steady progress toward their degree objective and graduate.

ADVISING

Frequent Communication with Students

The moment students declare their Intent to Register at San Francisco State, they are required to establish an sfsu.edu email address. This email address is the source of crucial communication related to their studies at SF State. In the past year, email messages have been developed and sent to continuing students on numerous topics to assist in their degree progress. A sample of the messages sent in the past year include:

o Greeting to new undergraduates from Dean of Undergraduate Studies
o "Get Advising" message sent to continuing students prior to Spring 2007 and Fall 2007 registration
o Message to incoming undergraduates who are undeclared describing where and how to get advising
o Welcome message from department chairs sent to incoming undergraduates who have declared a major
o Message to students nearing graduation on "Top 10 Reasons" why graduation applications are denied
o FYI (First Year Information) newsletter sent periodically to all first-year students giving them tips and information about navigating their way through academic processes and requirements

Choosing a Major

Academic Senate policy requires that students who have not declared a major by designated points in their studies lose registration priority. Students who enter SFSU as freshmen are expected to declare a major by the time they earn 70 units; students who enter as upper division transfers must declare a major by the end of the second semester in attendance. These policies are enforced through the registration process by lowering a student's registration priority to

the last day of registration if these limits are exceeded, reinforcing the importance of timely declaration of a major. An academic counselor in the Undergraduate Advising Center serves as the Undeclared Program Coordinator, assisting and advising students as they explore options before choosing a major.

Roadmaps

Roadmaps provide students with an ideal picture of how to sequence their major and general education requirements to progress steadily through their degree programs. Roadmaps have been created for all departments and all but a few have been reviewed and approved by the departments. When the roadmaps are fully vetted, they are submitted to the Registrar's Office for coding and posting on the University web site. It is expected that by the end of Summer 2007, 80% of the roadmaps will be available on the Registrar's Office web page – www.sfsu.edu/~reg for use by students and departments. Roadmaps are now incorporated in the Curriculum Review and Approval process when departments request new degree programs or revise existing programs. Eventually, degree roadmaps will be folded into the interactive Graduation Planner tool being developed to give students the ability to create an on-line Graduation Plan in consultation with an advisor.

Expanded Role for Advising Center

The Task Force concurred with the recently passed Academic Senate Advising Policy (S06-191) that recommended that the Advising Center be seen as the central point for university advising issues. In keeping with this principle, the following activities occurred in the past year:

- o Communication was initiated with College Resource Centers and Deans regarding the formation of the Undergraduate Advising Council.
- o A complete listing of all advisors on campus was created and is being finalized with input from Departments and Colleges.
- o Academic Progress Reports by major (a requirements worksheet) were created for use at transfer orientations where all majors are advised by Advising Center personnel with support from Colleges.

CURRICULUM PLANNING

As stated in the final report of the Facilitating Graduation Task Force, "The best advising will not help students graduate unless the recommended courses are available….When it comes to scheduling classes, the operative principle should be: no bottlenecks." To help departments determine which courses students need to graduate, the following new mechanisms have been developed and implemented in 2006-07.

Two-Tier Registration

A new registration process with two priority registration periods is being implemented for students to use when enrolling in classes for Fall 2007. Beginning on May 14, 2007, all continuing students may register for up to 8 units during the Early Priority Registration period. A second "pass" called Final Priority Registration will occur in July for students to add the rest of their classes. The benefits of the new registration procedure are:

- o Students will have access to a wider selection of courses before they fill.
- o Departments will learn earlier which courses are in highest demand and can adjust the class schedule when possible.
- o Students will be able to get advising from faculty advisors who are on campus in May when Early Priority Registration is in progress.
- o Newly admitted transfer students will be able to get advising and register for up to 8 units at their Transfer Orientation Workshop in early July.

Department chairs can use the results of Early Priority Registration (EPR) to give a good picture of the demand for courses in their departments. If possible, they can make some adjustments to the class schedule based on the demand expressed in EPR. Before EPR begins, chairs can also assign registration edits to limit certain sections to students at different class levels. The Wait List function is another tool that can be used to determine where there is excess demand for classes. Because signing up for a Wait List counts toward the 8-unit limit students can reserve during EPR, numbers on a Wait List give a clear indication of demand.

Use of these techniques will make Two-Tier Registration a powerful tool for providing students with better access to the classes they need to graduate.

Two Semester Class Schedule

To assist students in planning their academic schedules, departments now develop and post class schedules for two semesters, rather just the one next semester. Although the schedule for the later semester is clearly identified as "a preliminary schedule available for your planning purposes," having two semesters available for review on-line helps students and their advisors have a much better vision of what courses to choose when they register.

Curricular Roadblocks

The Facilitating Graduation Task Force heard from many different sources that students view access to classes they need in general education and in their major as frequent roadblocks to their progress. The review of All-University Requirements that is currently underway may identify changes in requirements that can be made to help students progress steadily toward their degrees. In

the meantime, departments will have better access to information about courses that may be roadblocks in their programs through use of Two Tier Registration enrollment data. Awareness of where roadblocks occur can help departments adjust their schedules when possible to be more closely aligned with student demand.

In response to the need to improve student access to the courses they need to graduate in a timely manner, Academic Affairs and Academic Senate faculty and staff have been working together this year to develop a policy on repeating courses. There is currently no university-wide policy on repeating courses and departments and colleges have been dealing with this issue individually and in different ways. A policy will provide a consistent university-wide approach to this issue.

OTHER FACILITATING GRADUATION TOOLS

DARS (Degree Audit Reporting System)

The Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) is an advising and evaluation tool that students can use to track progress toward their degrees. Students and their advisors can run an on-line audit at any time to find out which requirements a student has completed both in the general education and major components of their degrees. DARS also works as a planning tool to help students select courses and complete degree requirements more efficiently. Major requirements for nearly all (95%) of undergraduate majors have been coded on DARS. All 109 California Community Colleges and 5 California State Universities have transfer courses fully coded on DARS for lower division GE and statutory requirements. One-to-one articulations as published in ASSIST (California's Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer) are also coded for these institutions. Students and faculty can access a student's DARS report at any time on the SF State Web site, giving students a much better sense of their degree progress and another tool for making good choices each semester when they register for classes.

Welcome Days

For the first time in SF State history, all new freshmen will be welcomed to campus at a two-day welcome event designed to expose them to the wide-range of activities and services available to assist them in their college experience. Although not a direct outgrowth of the Facilitating Graduation Task Force, the inaugural offering of Welcome Days feeds naturally into building commitment to San Francisco State and to focusing students' energies on progress toward the ultimate goal of graduation.

Department Enrollment Management

To Assist Chairs in knowing more about the tools available for them to manage enrollments in their departments, members of the Facilitating Graduation Task Force met with Chairs on November 17, 2006 and shared information about enrollment management tools available to them. A resource sheet of on-line statistical and student data resource was distributed and Chairs were given a chance to explore the resources in a computer lab setting. Chairs were also encouraged to consider methods for managing enrollments such as limiting registration in key classes to majors or specified class levels.

CONCLUSION

Although the Facilitating Graduation Task Force has officially concluded its formal charge, the spirit of collaboration it engendered continues to mobilize campus change. Many initiatives that grew out of the Task Force deliberations have been institutionalized into on-going policies and practices. As each new initiative becomes real, San Francisco State makes further progress toward creating a "culture of graduation" that informs decision-making and permeates every aspect of campus life.