

Student Success and Graduation Initiative
San Francisco State University
Bi-Monthly Report

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What did your team complete this month and how will it help? As proposed in our November/December report (Note: Our faculty have been on winter break for much of the time since our last report):

1. We have implemented, as a result of information learned at the Ed Trust Access to Success Conference, an initiative called “On Track to Graduate.” Students who began at SF State as frosh in fall 2007 are being given the option for first priority registration in 2012-2013 fall and spring semesters if they complete and follow a Degree Completion Plan indicating they will graduate in spring 2013. They also will apply for graduation and be evaluated a semester early. This initiative should facilitate these students graduating within 6 years. Of 330 students who were eligible to participate in “On Track,” 128 signed up for the program and so far 114 applied to graduate in January 2013. The rest of the Fall 2007 cohort who did not sign up initially have been given the same opportunity for Spring 2013 priority registration. Thirty-six On Track students submitted early graduation applications for Spring 2013. They will receive an early preliminary evaluation so they can adjust their class schedules if they are missing key requirements.
2. A third subgroup to SSGI was added to focus on communication of the initiative to the campus community. Having a student representative on the subgroup has been valuable in identifying social media and other communication strategies, which consist of proposing an Associated Students and Undergraduate Studies sponsored “Student Success Day” two weeks before spring 2013 finals. Suggestions include tabling campus resources (e.g., tutoring, health and psychological counseling, academic advising), stress reduction activities that build community (e.g., “Dunk a Dr.,” physical edutainment, quad/library office hours), and academic skills workshops (e.g., studying techniques, library research). This activity should help students be better prepared for final exams.
3. Undergraduate Studies continued working with Academic Resources to determine the number of seats needed in every area of GE, plus the overlays, in order to successfully implement the new General Education curriculum in 2014. There are fewer university wide units required in the new curriculum, which should reduce time to graduation. Most GE areas now have enough seats in the newly approved courses to meet the demand.

4. Data indicate overall graduation rates improved slightly from 46.5% to 47.3%. Caucasian graduation rates dipped slightly from 46.1% to 44.0%. However graduation rates among URM improved over 6 percentage points, from 38.9% to 45.1%. Most notable amongst this group were the improvements among Native American students (from 35.7% to 50.0%-though a very small number of students) and Chicano/Mexican-American students (from 38.4% to 50.0%). The graduation gap between Non-URM and URM declined from 10.1 percentage points to just 2.9 percentage points, a considerable improvement.

We've also updated our fall undergraduate profile. The new profile reveals that we have about 1,000 more students this fall compared to last (total = 30,500). Additionally, we have more of both first-time freshmen and transfers. Total number of undergraduate degrees, however, dipped by about 500 to 7,175. All data can be found here:

<http://air.sfsu.edu/air/acad-inst-research/student/undergraduate>

San Francisco State University creates a Databook each year that focuses largely on retention and graduation rates of fall first-time freshmen and new transfer students. We have recently updated this and therefore have new rates that have informed discussions around campus.

5. Thirteen faculty members participated in the first pilot of our Early Warning system. Emails were sent to students who had issues with either attendance or academics, after four weeks and again after ten weeks into the semester. Anecdotally, faculty believed it was very helpful in getting students' attention, and subsequently for them to receive the help they needed. A rough analysis indicates that early alerts were sent to 97 students. The average final grade for students who met with a professor after the alert was 2.08, and for those who did not meet with the professor it was 1.70.
6. Nancy Gerber, professor of Chemistry, and her colleagues in Chemistry and Biology, are looking at the success patterns of students in their majors. This project was inspired by Nancy's participation in the AAC&U 2011 Student Success/HIPs Institute in Vermont and the general campus SSGI efforts. They are reviewing reports that allow them to track their majors and look at when students start to struggle. They submitted a grant proposal to NSF's STEP (Science Talent Expansion Program). STEM 6-year graduation rates are typically in the 25-30% range, with URMS about half of that. Hopefully, the new efforts around HIPs and faculty development will significantly improve the STEM graduation rates.
7. The Baccalaureate Requirements Committee is finalizing the FYE learning outcomes and will forward them to the Academic Senate for endorsement. This should provide more guidelines to the campus community for support for FTF.

8. Continued analysis of graduation rates reconfirms that our reporting processes do not paint an accurate picture of CSU student graduation. Our data show that if we include students who graduate at another institution the total rate rises from 46.5% to 55%. If we only look at white students who leave and graduate at another institution, the rate rises from 46.1% to 59.2%. At a time when the governor is suggesting drastic changes in higher education because of the low graduation rates, it would serve the CSU system well if we presented the true graduation numbers and explained our “swirling” population.
9. The Office of Academic Institutional Research engaged in a thorough examination of attrition in two studies, one looking at general attrition and another focused on attrition differences between local and Southern California students. A rich collection of results identified what types of students were more likely to drop out and when they were likely to do so. The results were the focus of two of our SSGI meetings, and should help us better identify students who need additional support. (Please see attached Newsletter)

What we hope to accomplish in the next two months.

1. Undergraduate Studies will continue working with Academic Resources to determine the number of seats needed in every area of GE, plus the overlays, in order to successfully implement the new General Education curriculum. We are making excellent progress in the course approval process. There are fewer university-wide units required in the new curriculum, which should reduce the time to graduation.
2. We will continue assessment of our academic success-coaching program, Beyond 12, as well as the Early Warning pilot.
3. The SSGI team will continue to review the 2009 SSGI proposal and evaluate the activities that have been completed, determining which have been successful, which have not been successful, and what remains to be done.
4. We will begin planning the “Student Success Day” to be held at the end of spring semester.
5. We will pilot a different Early Alert system in spring 2013. This one will be integrated into our Common Management System (iLearn), so should be more user friendly for faculty to complete.