

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

July/August 2012

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What did your team complete this month and how will it help? As proposed in our May/June report:

1. The banners promoting student success are now hanging in buildings across campus. They will also be displayed in prominent locations for “Welcome Days” and as students move into campus residences. These are a beautiful reminder of the importance of graduating.
2. There was a close review of academic records of the fall 2006 FTF cohort who applied for graduation but were denied. Reviewers looked for students whose deficiencies might be easily corrected with course substitutions or other immediate interventions so the students could still graduate in spring or summer 2012. The file of 41 denied or preliminarily denied students was reduced to only 18 students who still had remaining requirements to fulfill before they are eligible to graduate. This should improve the graduation rate for the fall 2006 FTF cohort.
3. 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.
4. The SSGI Steering Committee was broken down into sub-groups focusing on Student Success/HIPs and Data Review. The two groups have begun twice/month meetings to have better oversight over the initiatives, and hopefully continue to improve graduation rates.
5. 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. There are fewer university wide units required in the new curriculum, which should reduce time to graduation.

6. We continued assessment of our coaching program, Beyond 12. Student Affairs personnel organized three focus groups and have also implemented a series of surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of this program. The data will help us assess how well this pilot program is working to retain students.
7. As we are sure is true of all CSUs, we spent a great deal of time on the implementation of Early Start. It is the hope that both the English and Math Early Start courses will facilitate students completing remediation within their first year, and thus accelerate time to graduation.
8. Our new Director of IR, Dr. Darryl Dieter, began on July 23, 2012. This will prove extremely helpful to our tracking and assessment of initiatives.
9. IR provided a print out of all FTF from the 2009 cohort who had any of the three risk factors: URM, 1st generation, Pell. The print out included GPA, number of units, and major. We have sent each department a list of their students and have noted the ones that may be in academic difficulty. This has allowed us to really get down to the level of the individual in the graduation initiative. Other campuses such as Long Beach and SDSU indicate that this is how they have been able to improve their graduation rates.
10. The EOP Summer Bridge program that is twice as large as it has been in recent years was implemented. EOP Summer Bridge has expanded from 50 students to 105 students for Summer 2012. By expanding EOP Summer Bridge, which has been very successful in retaining and graduating students at a higher rate than the general population, particularly-first-generation, underrepresented minorities, we anticipate that we will be able to further close our achievement gap.
11. Eight faculty advisors were trained to work with professional advisors for all frosh and transfer orientations. From all reports, it was an extremely positive experience for everyone who was involved. One of the faculty members said of the experience, "I feel like I've learned so much from the orientation experience. Everything that the Director of the Advising Center used to say during the Graduation Requirements Task Force meetings now makes complete sense to me!" The faculty ambassadors mentioned they feel all faculty should work at orientation at least once. The faculty ambassadors better understand the relationship between curricular offerings and the ability of students to make progress toward their degrees. These faculty ambassadors will share their insights with faculty in their colleges in the fall.
12. We met with representatives of Hobsons' and developed a plan to pilot an Early Alert system in fall 2012. Five faculty members who are committed to the project will participate in the pilot. Hopefully the pilot will help us understand whether such an effort will improve retention, and ultimately graduation rates and student success.

13. The Student Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate completed draft Student Learning Outcomes for the First Year Experience. The SLOs have been submitted to the Baccalaureate Requirements Committee for review and refinement. Data show that completing a first year experience, one of the High Impact Practices, increases student success.

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. 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.
3. The SSGI task force will sponsor, in partnership with the Chancellor's Office, a campus viewing of the film, "First Generation." There will be a welcome/introduction from both the President and Provost, and a discussion following the screening lead by Jeff Gold. The screening will be open to the SF State campus community, as well as the Graduation Initiative committees from Bay Area CSUs. The screening will be held October 29th from 2:00-4:30.
4. Institutional Research will conduct an attrition study to determine patterns among students who leave the institution without completing their degrees.
5. 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 are also submitting a grant proposal to NSF's STEP (Science Talent Expansion Program).
6. Alvin Alvarez, Associate Dean of the College of Health & Social Sciences, is looking at the success of their majors. What is great about both efforts mentioned in #6 & #7 is that faculty are bringing the analysis down to the individual student level, which shows how the SSGI concepts are being embraced across campus.
7. 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.