

# CSU Peer Review Team Visit

## Facilitating Graduation Exit Meeting Notes

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On Monday, October 16, 2006, the CSU Peer Review Team, consisting of 2 administrators and 4 faculty, visited Sonoma State, and met with faculty, students, administrators and staff in a number of sessions during the course of the day. Included among the Team members were Dr. Sandra Sutphen, CSU Fullerton, Dr. Cristy Jensen, CSU Sacramento, Dr. Stanley Burstein, CSU Los Angeles, Dr. Steve Lefevre, CSU Channel Islands, Dr. Paul Spear, CSU Chico, and Dr. Sylvia Alva, CSU Fullerton.

The following comments were shared with a group of attendees at the Exit Meeting that included Drs. Carol A. Blackshire-Belay, Campus Coordinator and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Rose Bruce, Associate Vice President for Institutional Research, Katharyn Crabbe, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, and Art Warmoth, Professor of Psychology.

- Sonoma State's graduation rates are already good.
- FYE Pilot is a very interesting program, and the Team members suggested that we continue on this successful path. We need to begin focusing on how to expand the Pilot into the general curriculum, and that we need to seriously think about the number of faculty that it would take to be able to serve all of our incoming, freshmen students.
- The Team members were impressed with EnACT (Ensuring Access through Collaboration & Technology) which focuses on the retention of disabled students. EnACT is pedagogically sound and educates faculty to become sensitized to the needs of all students.
- The Team members encouraged us to collect data pertaining to policy changes and to substantiate and document our findings that these things are working. For example, the number of petitions dropped, the quality of students reinstated who go to the Junior College before returning to SSU. Or, what are the data that can help us evaluate the effectiveness of the new disqualification policy and procedures? Is it being collected and analyzed?
- At Sonoma State we only have the "bare bone" of CMS. There are gaps in terms of what faculty want and need, and we need to have better communication between campus constituents to provide better service. For example, faculty expressed an interest in a Wait-List. Also, there is uneven understanding of the status of the Degree Audit and how to use it.

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- The Team members suggested a much more integrated approach in CMS and servicing our students, and that student perception of their ability to access and understand their records varies widely.
- Advising of students could be improved. It is the Team members' perception that undeclared majors are served well and that students in majors are served well, but that students who are "in transition" are struggling. They suggested that a mapping exercise through which we could understand how students are "handed off" could be in order. They were impressed with advising in EOP, Hutchins, and the School of Business and Economics. Team members also reported that some faculty had suggested that restoration of the position of "Director of Advising" would be a good option.
- During the last 6-8 years there has been more focus on incoming freshmen, and the Team members understand why. They would, however, like to understand why there is a perception that there is little or no focus on transfer students. The Team members suggest that with the emphasis on freshmen, this may not have been as well thought out and implemented as it could have been. The perception is that better advising and more emphasis on linking careers with majors would be helpful and well-received.
- The Team members observed that the student-faculty ratio is higher than it should be.
- The University needs to pay more attention to the courses/sections that are offered, and where bottle-necks of students occur.
- The discussion of 3 versus 4 unit course load was discussed and they observed that EPC did not seem to understand why it was being asked to consider the issue.
- GE Reform needs to be defined and more widely discussed. The Team members noted that EPC did not seem to understand why it was being asked to think about General Education Reform. The Team members suggested that perhaps a "Facilitating Graduation Committee" could be established that might be a good start.
- The Team members were very impressed with the SOAR materials, and suggested that we make a counterpart for transfer students. Dr. Crabbe responded by informing them that it is already in existence.
- Students expressed that they would like to be more involved in university governance and decision-making. The Team members suggested that students need a voice in which to feel empowered, such as voting rights at the Academic Senate and its committees.
- The Team members were distressed by the "open warfare" between the faculty and the administration around issues such as the Bookstore. They were surprised to find that some faculty were taking such contentious issues into the classroom, which seemed inappropriate to them.
- Fullerton has modeled "Retention Grants" to incentivize projects in Student Affairs or Academic Affairs (or in collaboration) to improve retention.
- Sacramento has launched a "Senate Academic Advising Initiative."
- The Team members raised a number of questions about our Repeat Policy. Currently it is possible to do more than 24 units if courses are replaced. They suggest that we reconsider the policy.



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