

**Sonoma State University
Graduation Initiative
Bi-Monthly Report
April 29, 2011**

Core Implementation Group (CIG)

A key component of SSU's "Closing the Achievement Gap Delivery Plan" (December 23, 2009) was to institute a student feedback survey to be conducted each Spring semester and to use the results of the survey to gauge the success of any ongoing plans and programs implemented in the previous year, and initiate new corrective measures based on the results of the survey. The first survey was conducted in Spring 2010. Based on an analysis of the results of the first survey, the CIG formed a data subgroup that developed, under the direction of the Director of Institutional Research, a new Student Feedback Survey.

The opportunity to complete the Student Feedback Survey was provided to all students during the period March 28 to April 15. The survey was constructed to capture the significant factors that may influence graduation and retention, including educational and campus features as well as student characteristics. Question items covered the following potentially important influences: academic experience and progress, university context, and barriers and alternatives that might affect students' decisions about leaving. Students were asked about the likelihood they would be leaving Sonoma State University. Initial responses were robust: over 700 students completed the survey within 10 days. Analysis of the survey will proceed into the summer, providing information that will be used to identify and plan improvements. The analysis will be circulated widely throughout the university and will be utilized as a planning aid to CIG.

Academics:

First Year Programs: SSU's proposal to the AAC&U's High Impact Practices Institute in Vermont in June was accepted. The interdisciplinary team will work on First Year Programs at the Institute. SSU is delighted to have been selected for funding by the CSU to attend this event.

Academic Logistics:

Block Registration: New freshmen will be block registered according to their First Year transition program (e.g., FYE, EMT, Hutchins, English 100A "stretch", EOP Academy, FIG, etc.).

Wait List: Full waitlist functionality will be used for the first time during Fall 2011 registration, which is currently underway. After the initial registration period has ended, the waitlist data will be useful in assessing where classes are needed. Adjustments (dependent on budget allocations) will be made for open registration, beginning in August.

Student Life:

U-engage ("Upperclass Student Engagement"), now in its 2nd year, is the result of a year-long assessment and development work by a cross campus committee, comprised of Academic Affairs (faculty, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Provost, and Chair of Academic Senate); Student Affairs (Director of Res Life, Director of Academic Advising, Residential Life Coordinators, and academic advisors); and students. The purpose was to examine the retention rates of our continuing students and to develop a program to address needs. National data on sophomore year research and

programmatic best practices were reviewed and incorporated into the residential life model.

In its initial year, 50 students elected to participate in the program. In year two, Residential Life revised its programming and services for continuing students so that all 1200 continuing residents would be served by U-engage. While inconclusive, staff are very happy with results thus far. 51% of our current residents (1300 out of 2450) have signed a contract to reside in the residence halls for the 2011-12 academic year. Attached is a flyer describing U-Engage's mission, learning outcomes, and activities.

Request for Webinar

The Chancellor's Office has provided in-service webinars and workshops on topics that support and enhance retention and graduation. When the CO team visited SSU in February, members of CIG were very interested in hearing more about how campuses are determining which students might benefit most from various transition programs. I believe that Jeff noted that San Diego State University, in particular, has been utilizing a variety of data to identify students who would most benefit from first year experience seminars, etc. In a time of scarcity in resources, we need to be better able to pinpoint where specific interventions and services might be most useful, rather than to use a more "scatter shot" approach. We believe a webinar in this area would be of interest to several campuses. In general, a webinar that could provide models for using data to drive changes in campus initiatives in support of student retention and graduation would be most valuable.