

Graduation Rate Plan Report

Team Leader:

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All correspondence or contact with Cal Poly concerning the Graduation Rate Plan should be directed through the above office. The Graduation Rate Plan at Cal Poly is integrated into the entire campus operation and team members include Provost Office Staff, Deans, Student Affairs, Housing, Academic Senate and beyond. It is an integral element of our Strategic Plan and has been in operation since January of 2009.

Target for all grad rates by 2015 = 80%

Core steps

C-1. Assure that all Cal Poly academic degree programs have clearly articulated expectations. The path to a degree in any undergraduate major shall be able to be programmed in our degree audit system and made available to all, students, faculty members, advisors, etc., on the appropriate web site(s). **Metric:** Number of programs with a clearly articulated path to graduation. **Goal:** 100%. **Status:** Highly developed, expected achievement by Jan. 31, 2010. To be published on web prior to June 1, 2010. (Status terms, initial, emerging, developed, highly developed, are taken from the WASC rubric called "The Educational Effectiveness Framework")

C-2. Assure Cal Poly offers the courses that are required for students to progress normally to a degree (45 credits per year for 180 and 225 credit majors, 48 credits per year for 192 credit majors). Apply the principle that Cal Poly shall not stand in the way of any student's progress to a degree. **Metric:** Number of students on wait list for any course demanded by students' program of study. Please see Appendix B. **Goal:** Zero. **Status:** Developed. See attached appendix for an example course demand monitoring document. Most of demand is met, but there are still significant variations. Expect goal attainment by beginning of Fall Term 2011.

C-3. Assure that inter-major transfer policy is clear and that students can learn of their fate within two terms after applying to change major. **Metric:** Policy in place effective Fall 2010, policy works in practice. **Goal:** Policy in effect Fall 2010 and communicated to students by end of Spring Term 2010 and proved workable by end of Spring Term 2011. **Status:** Emerging. Task team charged with reaching these goals has accepted them as reasonable. Active discussion is underway.

Supporting attitudes and efforts

S-1. Develop a campus culture that expects to graduate any student in four or five years depending on the major selected. This needs to be accomplished without any reduction in expectations or standards. This expectation is broadly, but not uniformly, held. There is variability by College and Department. Increased internal communication will increase the social pressure on units and individual faculty members to think of themselves as partners

in their students' success. **Metrics:** Number of students on probation and student retention after the second year of attendance. **Goals:** Diminish number on probation, increase retention rate. **Status:** Developed.

S-2. Discontinue remedial courses. Students should be given the individual attention they need to reach the learning objectives of the introductory course. As application rates continue to increase and admission targets remain steady or decrease, the minimum MCA score for admission to Cal Poly is increasing beyond the point where national data suggest remediation is necessary. Still, admitted students bring with them a broad distribution of abilities and attitudes. Finally, recent studies suggest that students do better in courses where expectations are high as long as resources are devoted to helping them achieve those expectations. The recommended remediation practices in the CSU may not be consistent with these findings. **Metric:** Number of remedial courses offered at Cal Poly. **Goal:** Zero. **Status:** Emerging.

S-3. Advance place students that have reached the learning outcomes expectations of an introductory course. There exists national data that provides the probability of success at a given level in introductory courses. Tools include analyses of high school GPA in related courses, national standardized test scores, and advanced placement courses. **Metric:** Correlation between predicted and actual success for each student. **Goal:** Correlation is high, e.g. 0.90 or better. **Status:** Highly Developed.

S-4. No course shall be viewed as a "gateway" course, since all students are expected to succeed. If a student is given sufficient support to succeed, but still fails, that student should be advised to follow another path to graduation. **Metric:** Number of course repeats. **Goal:** Zero. **Status:** Emerging.

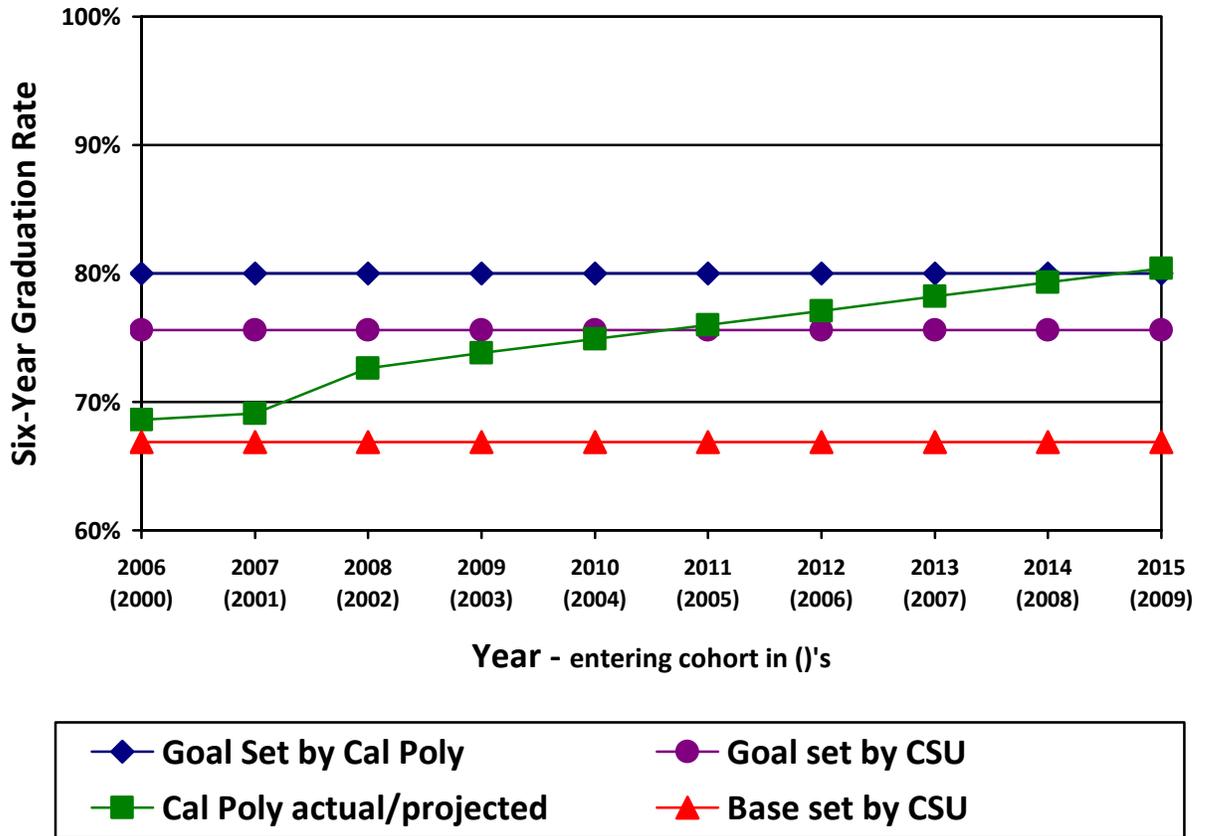
S-5. Assure continued partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs that promote student learning and success in persistence to graduation.

5a. Assure a campus climate that reinforces student belonging and an engaged academic life. **Metric:** Campus Climate Survey. **Goal:** Continuous improvement. **Status:** Highly developed.

5b. Offer academic coaching (proactive advising) to all students needing such help. Early alert information will be sought from housing staff, advisors, friends, and instructional personnel. **Metric:** Number of entering students with individualized, networked support teams. **Goal:** Each student deemed "at risk" has a support team explicitly assigned. **Status:** Initial.

5c. Offer living-learning experiences to campus housing residents that expand academic enrichment opportunities for those students. **Metric:** Match between enrichment offerings and resident profile. **Goal:** 90% of identified needs are met. **Status:** Developed.

Trajectory to Six-Year Graduation Rate Target



Please see Appendix A for initial steps taken from the outset of this project up to submittal date.

Appendix A

Time line to current status of the Plan

Oct. 2008

- Data is surfaced at Cal Poly that indicates that while we were approximately in line with first to second year retention rates with other highly selective public masters universities (>90%), our six year graduation rate, 72.6%, was lower than the 76.5% average for the same group. The President, when presented with this data, suggested we look to be more similar to the UC, 80.2%, and this led eventually to our current goal of 80% six year graduation rate for all classes of students.

Jan. 2009

- Academic Records and IT were asked to develop dashboards (now available on the Cal Poly Portal under the Enrollment Management tab) and more aggressively roll out the degree audit program. Dashboards began to appear almost immediately and continue to come on line as the work can be completed. This rapid response was possible because of considerable prior work developing our Data Warehouse, a necessary element in developing management information systems.

Feb. 2009

- President requested Academic Affairs consider early registration for continuing students before end of Spring Term.
- Deans Council begins an information dissemination effort in support of Cal Poly Plan (College Based Fees) rate increases to increase class availability and support materials.

Mar. 2009

- Degree audit reports are generated but cannot be completed due to lack of clarity in curricular expectations for a large number (~35%) of majors.
- Students vote overwhelmingly to increase College Based Fees over next three years.

Apr. 2009

- Chancellor requests President to delay fee implementation, a severe blow to our plans in the face of certain funding reductions. We soldier on.
- Early registration is set, block scheduling for first term freshmen is conceived as a way to best utilize early registration data and assure accessible schedules to incoming students.
- Provost announces to new students and parents at Open House that for incoming students, Cal Poly would provide the classes that students needed to stay on schedule for a known program of study, and asked the incoming students to make responsible registration decisions to take advantage of that pledge.

May 2009

- Early registration occurs for continuing students and student demand is largely met. Former Department Chair volunteers a block scheduling program he had developed for his department. It proves to be scalable and a very useful contribution to the effort.
- A course relevance report is generated that proves very useful when talking to departments about staffing needed courses relative to desired courses.

June 2009

- Provost visits with outgoing and incoming Chairpersons of the Academic Senate and requests their help with curricular issues associated with our progress to degree efforts. They enthusiastically agree and plan to organize the Senate's Fall Retreat around the issue. This eventually results in Senate membership on task forces (discussed below) and direct charges to Senate Committees dealing with General Education, Progress to Degree, Internal Transfers, and Affordability of Course Offerings.

July 2009

- After enormous effort on the part of Academic Records and University Scheduling, block schedules are developed and provided to incoming students. Students and parents are delighted.

Aug.2009

- Enrollment management workshop is held. Participation included administration, all colleges, faculty, student, and advisor representation. Consensus is built that we needed to explore several areas of effort.
- In admissions, a review of the MCA with an eye toward uniformity of requirements among colleges and a review mechanism for admission of transfer students is undertaken.
- Academic probation and disqualification practices needed to be reviewed as did the issue of super seniors and change of major policies.
- Progress to degree was seen as critically dependent on clarifying the path to graduation for all majors. This was a direct response to the evidence created from the degree audit implementation.
- New Registrar arrives on campus and given the charge to "clarify" the curriculum so it may be fully entered into degree audit.

Sep.2009

- Senate holds "Year of the Curriculum" Retreat and embraces charge described above from the new Senate Chair.
- Provost Office staff begins formation of four task teams. Each task team involves people from across campus relevant to the task. These teams are: Academic Probation and Disqualification; Minimum Student Progress; Internal transfers/change of major; and Academic Coaching.
- Fall Launch in University Housing is added to orientation activities along with opening of the final phase of Poly Canyon Village.
- Cal Poly becomes the largest residential campus in the CSU.

Oct. 2009

- Senate committees and task teams, each with Senate assigned membership, begin meeting and vetting proposals. An important discovery is that team activity leads to significantly increased level of communication among participating units. It is also discovered that internal communication within units is not always flawless. Internal communication is identified as an important element in the success of these efforts.
- A review of final census data shows the success of early registration and block scheduling by exhibiting a sharp jump, 1.96%, in the average course load of Cal Poly undergraduate students. This increase in average student load was all the more remarkable in that it was achieved with 92 fewer course/section offerings.

Nov. 2009

- Provost meets with AdviseNet after previously meeting with Cal Poly Advising Council. Both groups show excitement about the academic coaching concept. Both groups understand the need to create small social networks around new students and Client Relationship Management (CRM) software similar to that used successfully in our Admissions efforts is added to our suite of tools for this purpose. Both groups indicated that the way advising is organized and how advisors receive their information need careful review.
- CSUN Provost, in a private communication to Cal Poly's President, says that the six year

graduation rate from all National Clearinghouse participating universities for students beginning as freshmen at Cal Poly exceeds 90%. A request to the CO to verify this claim is unable to be fulfilled because of lack of appropriate resources. This is unfortunate because it implies the average graduation rate from the CSU as presently identified with graduation rates of individual component universities may under represent the actual production of the CSU to California's and the nation's pool of graduates.

Dec. 2009

- An enrollment management workshop is held to focus on resolving the conundrum of the success of the progress to degree efforts and reduced enrollment expected by the CSU. Decisions are reached that the best compromise is to try to reduce continuing student numbers (disqualification of lower division students that are eligible, and graduation of upper division students) to make way for first time students at a level that will provide the future desired steady state population. This has significant risks as most students are already matriculated and retained, and it is unclear whether the efforts described above can be successful as they are changes in practice. Trying to balance this risk using only new students causes long term instability in the institution and is a known detriment. The workshop concludes it is wise to take the risk.
- A request is made to the CO Delivery Team to help resolve the dilemma created by increasing course loads in the face of reduced FTES targets. Such increases in FTES yield no revenue, but do contribute to the target. The Delivery Team responds that there is nothing to be done and then suggests "mitigating" steps that would lead to further increases in average unit load. We remain uncertain if this response indicates a fundamental lack of understanding of the problem or inability to suggest a successful reconciliation.
- A letter from the CO is received limiting the options for fees associated with self support Summer Sessions. The apparent impact is to reduce opportunities to serve students that have gotten off track during the regular academic year. Such a reduction in service opportunity certainly impacts a student's progress to graduation. Combined responses from the CO leave us with the impression that higher priorities than the timely graduation of students exist within the CSU.

Jan. 2010

- Change of Major uniform policy proposal is presented to College Deans. Senate Executive committee agrees to timeline for consideration that would allow implementation in Fall 2010 term if proposal is supported by the full Senate.
- Freshmen students receiving academic probation letters received follow up message that they are now required to attend Success Workshops. Attendance at first workshop is 96% of those invited. Subsequent workshops continued to have >90% attendance.
- Analysis of performance of the fall freshman class demonstrated no negative impact of higher average course loads that resulted from block scheduling. This important result allayed concerns of a number of advisors that had predicted the higher course loads would result in lowered grades on average.
- In the first such progress to degree guideline at Cal Poly, College Deans agreed to proposed 24 unit cap beyond the base requirements for graduation in all majors. Some exceptions were noted.

Feb. 2010

- Began movement of interdisciplinary course numbers back to colleges and departments.
- Decided on a balanced approach to deal with the tension between the need for clarity and simplicity in curricular listings and the desire for flexibility. Flexibility depends heavily on technical and human factors. On the technical side workflow processing is necessary to assure immediate and accurate recording of changes, and on the human side exception processing needs to be moved from registrar's office to the advisor's table. The latter requirement will force us to

consider a central system of advisor communication and accountability. The College Deans offer to participate in the formulation and building of such a structure. The Academic Advisors Council leadership concurs.

- Our revision of the MCA admissions processing to a uniform model for all colleges and moving all university interests into the model for which it is possible went extraordinarily well. Offers will be made to the most well qualified pool of students in Cal Poly's history.
- Registrar reached out to colleges to help them understand, and, therefore, help the office improve block scheduling. This was done by translating the programming rules in to simple statements in English that illustrated the interrelationships required to provide a proper schedule for a new entering student. This step, building on top of our previous, largely successful, effort last summer should reduce anxiety on the part of advisors and build confidence in the quality of the schedule created.
- Expected Academic Progress policy first appears in draft form. When finished will appear on the Cal Poly website as www.eap.calpoly.edu.

March 2010

- Academic Senate passes a new Change of Major policy without any dissenting votes. See http://www.calpoly.edu/~acadsen/agendas/09-10_agendas/sa0309.pdf , page 2 -5, for text. This important affirmation of much behind the scenes work within and among the Colleges is the first public test of the commitment of this faculty body to Cal Poly's enrollment management efforts.
- Spring term opening day registration data demonstrates an increase in average course load over previous years' spring term. This is the third consecutive term that average course load increased over the prior year. This is important news on two fronts. It demonstrates the continuing commitment of the Colleges to assuring timely course availability to students, and it shows that a fundamental change occurred rather than just shifting resources from one term to another. The timely release of stimulus funds was an important factor in maintaining this effort.
- The Academic Advising Council concluded that the first test of a CRM package for enrolled students (RETAIN) was a resounding success. Proper use of such tools is critical to plans for reducing the various "achievement gaps" here at Cal Poly.
- Headcount enrollment continues to fall faster than in previous years as indicated in preliminary registration data. This is presumed to be the result of efforts to graduate super seniors and a more rigorous review of the academic records of students subject to disqualification. The Colleges have made an unprecedented effort to engage target groups, super seniors and those on academic probation, in contracts for success. This proactive advising puts in writing the student's requirements to meet a goal and assures the students access to classes to meet that goal. Note that contracts of this type are an element of the Change of Major policy mentioned in the first bullet.
- College of Business begins training for its on-line course delivery. See <http://129.65.176.68/frc/delivery.mov>
- Started working on converting some crucial curricular processes that are currently governed by paper forms into electronic workflows. These processes are: course substitution, concentration declaration, and individualized courses of study. The preliminary plan is to design and map these workflows during spring, build the workflows into the portal during summer, and implement them in fall. We'll approach the design and mapping phase with the assistance of Industrial Technology Professor Eric Olsen who facilitates our Kaizen Events.
- The Cal Poly Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis released a series of tables reporting persistence profiles for Cal Poly student each year up to seven years for the entire University and for each College. The tables are available upon request. Perhaps the most informative result of these analyses was the variation of the so called achievement gaps by College. Such gaps are much narrower in the non STEM colleges

Appendix B

Example course demand analysis report

Colleges are expected to use the report to diminish wait lists by shifting instructional personnel from points of excess capacity to points of under capacity. Conscientious response from the Colleges, of course, immediately changes the values in subsequent runs of this report. The goal is "to get the red out". This is only page 1 of a 42 page report, but it illustrates all the features to be found on any page. While the sample shown on this page contains Fall 2009 data, the report can be run for any term.

**COURSE DEMAND ANALYSIS
Fall 2009**

17:05 Friday, December 11, 2009 1

College=CAFES

Course:	Number of Sections	Enrolled	Wait List (Not Enrolled)	Enrollment Capacity	Adjusted Capacity (Max of Enrl/Enri Cap)	Room Capacity	Demand Ratio	Unmet Seats
AG 243	2	24	0	100	100	100	24.0%	-76
AG 339	1	17	0	20	20	20	85.0%	-3
AG 360	1	30	14	26	30	35	146.7%	14
AG 400	1	2	0	20	20	20	10.0%	-18
AG 450	1	2	0	4	4	35	50.0%	-2
AGB 101	2	171	0	202	202	200	84.7%	-31
AGB 202	4	121	1	128	128	120	95.3%	-6
AGB 212	4	99	0	160	160	160	61.9%	-61
AGB 214	2	92	0	96	96	96	95.8%	-4
AGB 301	3	116	18	120	120	120	111.7%	14
AGB 310	3	114	2	120	120	120	96.7%	-4
AGB 312	2	87	6	80	87	80	106.9%	6
AGB 313	3	109	2	120	120	120	92.5%	-9
AGB 318	3	77	0	100	100	100	77.0%	-23
AGB 321	2	40	0	60	60	60	66.7%	-20
AGB 323	1	47	17	48	48	48	133.3%	16
AGB 324	1	27	0	28	28	28	96.4%	-1
AGB 326	1	36	0	36	36	36	100.0%	0
AGB 331	1	26	0	28	28	28	92.9%	-2
AGB 339	1	32	0	30	32	30	100.0%	0
AGB 370	1	20	0	40	40	40	50.0%	-20
AGB 400	4	16	0	90	90	90	17.8%	-74
AGB 401	4	150	7	144	150	144	104.7%	7
AGB 405	1	33	4	30	33	30	112.1%	4
AGB 406	1	24	4	24	24	24	116.7%	4
AGB 410	1	18	0	36	36	36	50.0%	-18
AGB 421	1	31	2	30	31	30	106.5%	2
AGB 433	1	20	0	30	30	30	66.7%	-10
AGB 440	1	15	0	20	20	20	75.0%	-5
AGB 443	2	71	8	90	90	72	87.8%	-11
AGB 444	2	58	7	60	60	56	108.3%	5
AGB 450	2	57	1	70	70	70	82.9%	-12
AGB 455	1	24	0	36	36	36	66.7%	-12
AGB 460	2	57	25	56	57	48	143.9%	25
AGB 461	9	40	0	270	270	270	14.8%	-230
AGC 102	2	42	0	48	48	48	87.5%	-6

* Some students on the waitlists may not have met pre-requisites, may have course conflicts, etc. and do not come off of the waitlist.
 * Some students waitlist an overload of courses without intention to actually enroll in all of them to assure a desired load.