

ACADEMIC SENATE
of
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

tem 10

AS-2697-05/EX/AA
May 5-6, 2005

Reaffirming the Role of Faculty in Initiatives for
“Achieving the Baccalaureate Degree”

- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (CSU) advise campus senates on their role in responding to the Board of Trustees' (BOT) action item for May 10-11, 2005, on “Recommended Items for Campus Plans for Facilitating Graduation,” with special attention to the recommendations regarding General Education requirements; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That in advising the campus senates, the Academic Senate CSU strongly reaffirm that the faculty have “primary responsibility”¹ for the curriculum and that these BOT recommendations as regards the curriculum are advisory only; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU also advise the campus senates to take note of the academic principles that guide program design and other considerations, particularly student choice of courses, that affect student progress to graduation.

RATIONALE: This resolution directs the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate CSU to respond to the BOT action item, “Achieving the Baccalaureate Degree.” We are particularly concerned that the BOT is directing the Presidents and faculty to implement the recommendations prior to consultation with the campus Academic Senates and without regard for the role of the faculty in determining the curriculum.

APPROVED WITHOUT DISSENT – May 5-6, 2005

¹ “Collegial governance assigns primary responsibility to the faculty for the educational functions of the institution in accordance with basic policy as determined by the Board of Trustees. This includes admission and degree requirements, the curriculum and methods of teaching, academic and professional standards, and the conduct of creative and scholarly activities.” Quoted from *Report of the Board of Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Collegiality, and Responsibility in the California State University* (adopted by the Board of Trustees of the California State University, September 1985).

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Achieving the Baccalaureate Degree

Presentation By

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Executive Vice Chancellor and
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Summary

Improving degree completion has been a priority of the California State University since 2002. This item presents a plan for renewed efforts to improve graduation rates.

Improving Student Progress to the Baccalaureate Degree

In Fall 2002 the Board of Trustees adopted a three-part initiative to improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which students earn the baccalaureate degree. The two overarching goals of the initiative are to graduate a higher proportion of students and to earn the degree while accruing fewer unneeded or unwanted courses. As Attachment A indicates, the graduation initiative has three parts: improving preparation to begin college, strengthening the transfer process, and helping enrolled students progress toward the degree. The CSU has made substantial progress on improving preparation for college through the Early Assessment Program (EAP). Similarly, a streamlining of the transfer process is well underway through the Lower-Division Transfer Project (LDTP). The final piece in this triad is campus actions to improve degree completion.

December 2002 saw the release of the report of the CSU Task Force on Facilitating Graduation, co-chaired by Jacquelyn Kegley, then academic senate chair, and Louanne Kennedy, then provost of CSU Northridge. When an early draft of the report had been developed, the Task Force met with four members of the CSU Board of Trustees, all of whom had indicated a strong interest in the topic and announced it to be a major initiative for the upcoming year. The Task Force report asked each CSU campus to develop a plan, based on institutional research, to improve graduation rates. Each plan would contain elements common to all CSU institutions and some elements unique to the specific culture and environment of the campus. Campuses were expected to address the development of roadmaps, the development of class schedules designed to accommodate these roadmaps, mandatory progress-to-degree audits, improved university catalogs, and the effective use of summer terms. They were encouraged to also consider developing first-year experience courses, effective advising practices, and faculty development experiences for improved

instructional effectiveness. Copies of the campus plans were forwarded to the Office of the Chancellor in November 2003.

Since that time, the Board has received regular progress reports on the general topic of campus efforts to facilitate graduation. For example, in November 2004, the Board heard a report on a December 2003 two-day conference on best campus practices in facilitating graduation; on a June 2004 meeting at the Chancellor's Office on the topic of first-year experience courses; and generally on campus progress in developing roadmaps for degree programs and using degree audits.

More recently, at its January 2005 meeting, the Board of Trustees heard a report that drew upon information and perspective gathered in collegial visits to seven campuses undertaken in the week of January 11–18, 2005. Five themes emerged in that report, including (1) a recommended focus on reducing units to the baccalaureate, rather than reducing time to the undergraduate degree; (2) providing support for lower-division students in clarifying life and career goals, on the way to declaring a major; (3) using degree audits and similar strong advisement practices; (4) assuring class schedules that meet students' needs; and (5) reviewing and, where appropriate, tightening of campus policies governing course repetition. At its March 2005 meeting, the Board heard a further report that was founded upon formal recommendations from the Academic Senate, CSU in describing a broad, multi-constituency consensus as to best practices.

Included in Attachment B, based on the themes derived from campus visits, is a plan for renewed efforts to improve graduation rates in the CSU. Campuses will be asked to address these items and report on their progress at future meetings of the Board.

Almost all undergraduates enter the CSU intending to get bachelor's degrees, yet 40 percent never earn a CSU degree and a third never earn a bachelor's degree from any college. This is an unfulfilled commitment of substantial time and money made by tens of thousands of students and by California's citizen taxpayers. Improved graduation rates will significantly benefit students and California's society and economy.

The following resolution is recommended for adoption:

RESOLVED, That the Board of Trustees direct the chancellor to charge the campus presidents and faculty to implement the recommendations in this report and to file periodic reports on campus progress in meeting the goals.

Achieving the Baccalaureate Degree

CSU Campus Initiatives

- **Efficiency in academic program design**
- **Encouraging students to choose efficient pathways to the baccalaureate**
- **Tools to keep students on efficient pathways to the baccalaureate**
- **Strong advising strategies and practices**
- **Campus monitoring and feedback**

Improving Transfer

- **60 units for upper-division transfer**
- **CSU systemwide core transfer program**
 - **Completion of GE (39 units)**
 - **Intent to declare a specific major**
 - **Completion of lower-division major prerequisite courses**
 - **Early commitment to campus**

K-12 Academic Preparation

- **Early assessment**
- **Targeted senior year preparation**
 - **Professional development of high school teachers**
 - **Identification of supplemental courses and other forms of instruction/tutoring in schools**

Recommended Items For Campus Plans for Facilitating Graduation

I. Efficiency in Academic Program Design

1	<p>Reduction of Required Units in Programs Leading to the Baccalaureate Degree</p>	<p>Trustees reduced the minimum requirements for the baccalaureate from 124 to 120 semester units (or quarter unit equivalent) in 2000. In doing so, they brought the California State University into alignment with peer institutions across the United States, including the University of California. At the same time, Trustees asked campuses to review and to reduce to this new minimum those baccalaureate programs that, consistent with high academic quality, could be so reduced. It is recognized that some technical majors may continue to require more than 120 semester units to the degree. Examples include some programs in the sciences, engineering, fine arts, and certain others where degree programs respond to well-defined and well-justified learning needs (that in some cases are expressed in accreditation standards).</p> <p>Campuses have made excellent progress in reviewing and reducing unit requirements. However, campuses report that not all programs that might be reduced consistent with high academic quality have been so reduced. A process tied to program review cycles continues for all programs that presently exceed the minimum of 120 semester hours for the baccalaureate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This topic directs campuses again to focus on this issue; to renew a local examination of high-unit baccalaureate programs; and to mark as a success reductions in unit requirements in programs that now require more than 120 semester units (or quarter unit equivalent) to complete.
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2	Selective Reduction of Campus Graduation Requirements	<p>Currently, the CSU requires more units in general education than our regional accrediting agency (WASC) mandates. Some campuses add still more graduation requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This topic directs campuses to begin or to renew a local examination of graduation requirements, including the units required in general education; to address whether, consistent with the achievement of established student learning outcomes, all students or some students may be relieved of some requirements; to consider the extent to which credit by assessment is well-utilized for these requirements; particularly for high-unit majors to consider also more frequent double-counting of units between and among general education, the major, and other graduation requirements; and generally to seek fresh efficiency in this area. The Chancellor will approve reasonable campus-recommended variations on Title 5 graduation requirements that facilitate student progress to the baccalaureate degree while maintaining high academic standards and meeting CSU educational goals.
II. Supporting Students in Choosing an Efficient Pathway to the Baccalaureate		
3	Emphasis on Graduation in Orientation Sessions for New Students (First-time Freshmen; Transfers)	<p>Orientation for new students was among many topics discussed during collegial visits to seven CSU campuses in January 2005 to discuss campus efforts to facilitate students' progress to the baccalaureate. More than one campus interlocutor suggested that graduation was not emphasized enough in such programs. Surely campus orientation programs vary in their emphases, and some may sufficiently take an emphasis on graduation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item directs campuses to review the extent to which students are encouraged in such programs to highly value efficient progress toward the degree.
4	Strengthened Support for both General Education and Life / Career Goal Clarification for Lower-Division Students	<p>Uncertainty about choice of careers, and how best to associate career choices with broader life goals, was a theme in collegial visits to seven CSU campuses in January 2005. It was noted that first-time freshmen, in particular, delay choosing a major and take at least some courses that ultimately do not contribute to degree completion as they seek information about careers and fit with life goals. Campus interlocutors commented that support for these first-time freshmen (and others who seek the support) could help students choose efficient paths to the degree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item directs campuses to review and where suitable to improve the support offered to students who seek help in clarifying life and career goals.

5	Prominent Association of Career Outcomes with Degree Majors in Catalogs, and Other Student Informational Materials & Resources	<p>Most program faculties now offer information about careers for which their degrees may prepare students, and such information is typically available on disciplinary association web sites and other places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item directs campuses to review the prominence and the ease of access to such information; the extent to which programs have disciplinary “days” to help students to understand careers; the suitability of including career information in introductory classes; the extent to which faculty make themselves available for informal career advice; the extent to which campuses make strong utilization of career centers and other campus-wide resources; and take other appropriate actions.
6	Choice of Degree Major Required at a Reasonable, Early Juncture	<p>It is recognized that students will change majors with some frequency, as younger students mature, and as undecided students at any age gather more information about majors and careers. Yet a substantial consensus sees value in early choices of major, with benefits including entrance to a peer community surrounding the major, offering both social and learning support; the drawing of attention to degree requirements, reinforcing the goal of graduation; and the ability to develop a personal study plan through to graduation in the context of a roadmap to the degree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item requests campuses to require undergraduates to make an early choice of major, supported by strengthened career and life goal advisement, and by prominent association of career outcomes with degree majors.
III. Tools to Keep Students on Efficient Pathways to the Baccalaureate		
7	Wide Promulgation of Roadmaps to Degree in an Official, Centrally-Archived, Graphically Authoritative Format	<p>Roadmaps to the degree are course-by-course articulation of student study needs with pre-planned offerings of required and elective courses by term. Roadmaps were a prominent recommendation in the system-wide graduation report published in 2002, and in January 2005 collegial visits to campuses most interlocutors reported that most programs have developed such roadmaps. Campus colleagues suggested, however, that some were not prominently displayed, others were graphically uninviting and by appearance thus seemed to lack authority; few were posted in an easily-accessible campus web site.</p>
8	Alignment of Class Schedules to Roadmaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ These items remind campuses to ensure that all programs have strong and clear roadmaps; that the promises in them are taken seriously; and that roadmaps are prominently and authoritatively displayed. Among the promises in roadmaps both implicit and explicit is that class schedule development will take roadmaps well into account, avoiding wherever possible “bottleneck” courses within a major or academic program.

9	Provision in Policy of Mandatory Individual Student Study Plans to the Degree	Upon the declaration of a major, and congruent with a published degree program roadmap, students have an obvious opportunity to define what courses should be taken in what semester or term on the way to the baccalaureate. This may be done at any pace (number of courses per term) the student chooses; and evidently can be refreshed in the event that a student varies from his or her individual plan in a particular term.
10	Use of Cumulated Individual Student Study Plans in Planning Class Schedules	<p>When done electronically in the context of a CMS campus information system, student study plans should be available as data that, when cumulated, provide program leaders with excellent information as to course demand when developing the schedule of classes for a given term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ These items request campuses to make strong use of roadmaps and CMS information systems to provide students with progress reports available even 24/7. Campuses should use the cumulated information to build class schedules that meet student study needs.
11	Adoption of Strategies for Student Success and Learning Support: Tutoring; Technology-mediated Supplementary Learning; and Similar Tactics	<p>Campuses now support student success in courses and major programs via learning centers, writing centers, tutoring available to all students and/or to special cohorts, and in other ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item directs campuses to review the frequency and extent of use of such programs and, where suitable, to put in place further support for student learning. Some programs may be technology-mediated, as where learning objects available on web sites are conveniently made part of learning management systems (such as Blackboard, WebCT or Moodle). Other support programs may rely upon faculty, staff, or student peer tutors.
12	Renewed Enforcement of Policies that Limit or Discourage Drops, Withdrawals, Grades of Incomplete	<p>Campuses appear to have suitable policies that limit or discourage student exit from classes prior to completion. Some on campuses commented, however, that enforcement of these policies is uneven, and in some cases may be too forgiving.</p> <p>Repetition of course policies on the campuses appear to vary widely; in some instances campus interlocutors have noted inconsistent policy statements in campus documents; a number of campuses appear to permit course repetitions with “grade forgiveness” for an extraordinarily wide range of circumstances, and with nearly-unlimited frequency, even for students who already have passed the class with a grade of C or better.</p>
13	Adoption or Renewed Enforcement of Policy that Limits the Number of Course Repetitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ These items direct campuses to revisit these issues, to make new policy where appropriate, and to encourage enforcement of existing policy where appropriate. The Academic Senate, CSU has been requested to consider developing a model policy that addresses these issues.

IV. Strong Advising Strategies and Practices

14	Campus Provision of a Rich CMS Information and Communications Environment for Major Advising	<p>Campuses interlocutors demonstrated and discussed sophisticated systems for accumulating student records, and providing them on demand to students and their advisors. Those familiar with them remarked that advising was made more powerful in such an environment, and that students could be encouraged to review their own progress such as prior to discussing their programs with major advisers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆ This item requests campuses to continue as a high priority the development and provision of such advising resources, exploiting tools in the Common Management System.</p>
15	Strong, Timely Major Advisement, Including Mandatory Advisement upon Declaring or upon Changing a Major	<p>Campuses vary in ways and means of providing advisement, and programs within campuses similarly vary, with some relying upon staff to do much of the advising, others asking faculty equally to share the advising load, and still others visiting the work of advising on selected faculty who in turn receive workload credit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆ This item directs campuses to renew commitments to advising that in nearly all cases are already strong; to review policies that require students to seek advising; where suitable, to take steps via policy and/or practice to increase the frequency of advisement in the major; and to recognize appropriately workload burdens associated with advisement.</p>
16	Frequent Use of Degree Audits	<p>A wide, multi-constituency consensus commends frequent degree audits as a strong practice to spur students toward graduation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆ This item asks campuses to draw upon CMS information and communications systems, and campus commitments to strong and timely advisement in the major, in encouraging widespread and appropriate use of degree audits.</p>
17	Mandatory Degree Audits not later than at 70 Semester Units (or Quarter-unit Equivalent)	<p>A wide, multi-constituency consensus commends a degree audit at the junior level, which would capture both native undergraduates and transfers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆ This item directs campuses to consider strongly a policy that imposes this requirement, in instances where such a policy is not present now.</p>

18	Mandatory and If Needed Intrusive Advisement as Student Approaches / Exceeds Minimum Units Required for the Degree	<p>A wide, multi-constituency consensus exists that students very near or beyond the minimum units required for the degree should be strongly encouraged to graduate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item asks campuses to develop policies to impose this requirement in instances where such a policy is not present now. Suggested elements include full degree audit at least for selected students as they approach the degree; and the use of registration holds or other strong requirements for students whose accumulated unit totals exceed the minimum requirements for the degree, operationalizing in that way a strong advising requirement.
<i>V. Campus Monitoring and Feedback</i>		
19	Development and Use of “Dashboard Indicators” for Campus-wide Monitoring of Graduation	<p>“Dashboard” indicators provide the same selected key information very frequently – like a speedometer, a tachometer, an oil pressure sensor. CSU Northridge tentatively has been providing frequent summary statistics on midterm grade reports; attendance at advisement sessions; stop-outs during and following first term; students who have accumulated more than 120 units and continue in good standing; and term-by-term stopouts. Campus choices may vary, but the core idea is to let campus leadership at many levels monitor changes in the data, allowing feedback to affect behaviors and choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item requests campuses to develop, disseminate, and use “dashboard indicators” pertaining to graduation.
20	Review by CSU Academic Peers of How Efforts at Encouraging Graduation are Succeeding, by Degree Program	<p>Accountability and other strong practices in public administration generally call for display of practices and results. Such a display is contemplated here, modeled on program review procedures. Teams of 3 – 5 academic peers from sister CSU campuses after being trained would pay a one-day visit to the campus being reviewed. Efforts to facilitate graduation at department / program level would be discussed with faculty and students; at day’s end, the visitors would have an exit interview with the president and other campus administrative and faculty leaders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item requests campuses to embrace and facilitate visits by academic peers to assess progress toward facilitating graduation.

VI. Assuring the Priority of Facilitating Graduation

21	Provide the Board of Trustees with periodic reports	<p>The keen interest of the Board of Trustees in this issue makes continuing reports appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item directs the division of Academic Affairs in the Chancellor’s Office to prepare a schedule for periodic reports by presidents to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees concerning campus actions taken to facilitate graduation; and to begin such reports immediately.
22	Provide appropriate funding, support	<p>All constituencies recognize that, to varying extents, items 1-19 will take energy and dollars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This item reminds campus presidents to assure that budgets and priorities appropriately support efforts to facilitate graduation.