

# **San Francisco State University**

## **Best Practice for Facilitating Graduation – New Student Orientation Program**

**Joint Provosts & Campus Senate Chairs Meeting  
October 5, 2005**

The SFSU best practice for facilitating graduation presented for discussion at the joint Provosts and Campus Senate Chairs meeting is the new student orientation program. This best practice is related to item three, Emphasis on Graduation in Orientation Sessions for New Students, in Chancellor Reed's August 2, 2005 coded memorandum to presidents.

Several features distinguish the program as a best practice. First, the day long new student orientation program is primarily focused on graduation requirements, with the goal that by the end of the day, students will have a plan for their first year.

Second, several of our colleges have requested orientation days devoted exclusively to students in their majors. An important outcome of the college-specific orientation is improved major advising for our incoming first time freshmen and transfer students.

Third, for approximately 15 years SFSU has offered orientation programs in southern California so that students and their families do not have to travel to San Francisco. Over the years attendance at the sessions has dramatically increased. Students and families receive virtually the same experience as those who attend the on-campus event. The only exceptions are the campus tour (although each year the Advising Office creates a video presenting campus life) and a slightly slower registration process for first time freshmen (which is improving every year with advances in technology).

An indicator of the program's appeal is the percentage of first-time freshmen and transfer students who attend the orientation. In 2005, 3,272 (99%) first-time freshmen attended orientation. Although not mandatory, those who attend orientation register on-site (before anyone else) and their schedules are confirmed before they leave for the day. In the same year, 2,267 (75%) transfer students attended orientation. Their incentive was an early evaluation of their transfer work. If they registered for an orientation at least two weeks in advance, an evaluation was prepared for them. Otherwise, transfer work was not evaluated until early in their first semester at SFSU.