



## MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 28, 2005

TO: CSU Provosts and Campus Senate Chairs

FROM: Dr. Eduardo Ochoa, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
and Dr. Elizabeth Stanny, Chair of the Academic Senate

RE: Statement of Exemplary Campus Practice(s) in the Context of the 22  
Enumerated Items in Campus Actions to Facilitate Graduation

### **Emphasis on Graduation in Orientation Sessions**

Sonoma State University, a relatively small, predominantly undergraduate residential campus, makes effective use of its orientation programs for new students to set the expectation of timely graduation. For the past ten years, President Armiñana has traditionally addressed the new students and their families as a part of the Summer Orientation, Advising and Registration programs. In his address, Dr. Armiñana explains clearly and humorously that graduation in four years is a simple matter of following the formula:  $8 \text{ semesters} \times 15 \text{ units per semester} = 120 \text{ units}$  which is the minimum required for the degree. He recommends that parents take down the old art projects from the refrigerator door and post the formula in its place. He expands on the point by noting that “if you begin to hear about plans for 12 units or 9 units, the four-year plan has gone out the window.”

Dr. Armiñana’s advice to the students and their families is then reinforced by the academic advisors who work with the students and by the student development professionals who work with the parent orientation. The approach has been an effective part of the SSU strategy to improve progress toward the degree by helping us to increase the average unit load from 12.38 in Fall 1995 to 13.27 in Fall 2005.

### **Wide Promulgation of Roadmaps to Degree**

Since 1996 Sonoma State University has included model eight semester plans for each of its undergraduate degree programs in the University Catalog. The plans are revised, if necessary, on a biennial basis (when the catalog is revised). The plans take into consideration the course rotations for courses that are not offered every semester.

New students are introduced to the eight semester plans in their orientation programs and by their academic advisors in subsequent semesters.