

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS
Coordinated Efforts to Serve Increasing Numbers of First-Time Freshmen
October 5, 2005

In Fall 2005, California State University, Stanislaus enrolled a record number of first-time freshmen. This record enrollment of 876 freshman is a result the university's efforts to ensure the academic success of its students and to increase the graduation rate of first-time freshmen. Strong collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs is reflected in the success of the following efforts.

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER—The Student Success Center at CSU Stanislaus addresses student success in a purposeful, coordinated manner, thus maximizing campus resources and identifying pathways for student success. Center activities are guided by the Student Success Committee, which was established to evaluate, identify and implement appropriate interventions to promote student success through our students' academic careers. Projects include First-Year-Experience planning, Summer Reading, Convocation, Retention, Data Dashboard, Graduating Seniors Program, and participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement. By including individuals who are already part of the existing campus student success efforts, the committee promotes an agile and purposeful approach to enhancing student success while maximizing campus resources.

FIRST-YEAR ADVISING—Freshmen receive advising assistance prior to enrollment and throughout the freshman year. Advising begins with e-mail communication about testing and orientation. Upon receipt of test results, staff and student peers in the First-Year Programs and Advising Office call each student, ensure that an orientation program is selected, and discuss potential class schedules. Students are then block-scheduled by staff for the fall semester to accommodate any needed remediation and to facilitate recommended courses from their majors. Matrices of recommended courses by major are developed through consultation with colleges and departments. All first-time freshmen students are strongly encouraged to participate in one of the first-year experience learning communities. All undeclared freshmen are required to develop individual education plans within their first year at CSU Stanislaus. Freshmen needing remedial course work are intrusively advised, and their progress is monitored through the First Year Programs and Advising Office. Most departments require all first-time freshmen to receive advising assistance at least once during their freshman year.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE—In just its second year the First-Year Experience Program enrolls 151 students in 8 learning communities, which link one or two General Education courses to a 2-unit first-year-experience course. The classes in the learning community are integrated around an interesting theme, and the seminar prepares students to be academically successful and encourages their involvement on campus. The seminars are co-taught by faculty and peer leaders, successful CSU Stanislaus students, who serve as mentors. Research shows that students who are part of a learning community and a FYE program do better in their classes, are more active on campus, make friends more easily, and get to know faculty more personally than students who do not join such a program. The FYE program provides these benefits. Themes for Fall 2005 include Movements in History, Questions of Perception and Identity, Business in Today's World, Be an Effective Team Player, Study Skills for English Language Learners, All the World's a Stage, and Integrating Language Arts and Fine Arts in the Elementary Classroom.

REMEDIATION—CSU Stanislaus made rapid, steady improvement in successful remediation of students in one year, exceeding the system rate with the class of 2002. Led by the College of Arts, Letters & Sciences dean's office representatives from ALS, English, Mathematics, Enrollment Services, the Writing Center, Student Affairs, Testing, and First-Year Programs form a cross-functional team to address remediation issues. They continue to meet periodically each year to ensure policy and procedures support the goal of remediation for all students within 12 months of admission. The essential elements of the remediation plan include (1) student awareness of testing and the 12-month completion requirement, (2) continuous enrollment in classes, (3) Advising assistance in locating the appropriate remediation classes, (4) mandatory enrollment in designated classes in subsequent semesters, and (5) course sequences in math and English that can be completed in one or two academic terms.

FACULTY IN RESIDENCE—The Faculty-in-Residence Program is an innovative living/learning collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The program sponsors a faculty member and his or her family to live in the campus housing facility. Release time, room, board, and programming funds are completely underwritten by the program. The program fosters an increased academic focus to residential living, promotes out-of-classroom connections to faculty, and provides increased academic-related programming for residential students.