To: President Norma Rees, CSU Hayward  
President Robert S. Maxson, CSU Long Beach  
President James M. Rosser, CSU Los Angeles  
President Jolene Koester, CSU Northridge  
President J. Michael Ortiz, CSPU Pomona  
President Albert K. Karnig, CSU San Bernardino  
President Robert A. Corrigan, San Francisco State University  
President Ruben Arminana, Sonoma State University 

From: David S. Spence

Subject: Request for Invitations for Visits by Academic Affairs Staff to Discuss Campus Efforts to Improve Graduation Throughput

Trustees have made facilitating student progress to the baccalaureate degree their first priority for the California State University. In this, Trustees have sought improvement of the undergraduate experience, by permitting students to achieve their degrees with fewer excess units. In this, Trustees have sought also to enhance the capacity of the CSU to enroll qualified applicants, by freeing up space for new matriculants as current students reach graduation.

This is a request for an invitation for a campus visit by two senior Academic Affairs staff at the Office of the Chancellor to gather information on campus-based efforts to improve student throughput to graduation. I plan to join a number of these visits. Other visits will be made by Associate Vice Chancellor Keith Boyum and a senior colleague. Information thus gathered will be used in my presentation to Trustees at the upcoming January 25, 2004 meeting.

- Proposed dates include January 11, 12, 13, 14, and 18. We anticipate conversations of about two hours’ duration. We would expect to visit not more than one campus per half-day.
- We have chosen campuses from which to request invitations on the basis of convenience, and also with an eye toward sampling some of the size, location, student body characteristics, and other elements of diversity that make up the CSU system.
- Proposed campus-based interlocutors would include as many of these as may be available on short notice: President; Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs; Vice President for Student Affairs; appropriate staff to these senior administrators; chair of the academic / faculty senate; president of the campus Associate Students; and selected others in campus discretion.
Please see attached a proposed list of discussion topics.

**Responses by January 5, 2005 would be greatly appreciated.** E-mail responses are suitable, addressed to Associate Vice Chancellor Keith Boyum via Ms. Cindy Cordova (e-mail: ccordova@calstate.edu). Dr. Boyum may also be reached by phone at 562-951-4712. We ask that you indicate whether you will be able to invite us, and if so on which half-days. We ask also that you indicate staff with whom we may be in touch (phone or e-mail) to finalize arrangements. Please accept our thanks for your assistance in making these arrangements on a short-time frame.

Attachment

cc: Provosts / Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs  
Vice Presidents, Student Affairs  
Dr. Charles B. Reed  
Dr. Keith O. Boyum  
Mr. Allison G. Jones  
Dr. Lorie Roth

For information:
Dr. William B. Eisenhardt, President, California Maritime Academy  
Dr. Warren J. Baker, President, CPSU San Luis Obispo  
Dr. Horace Mitchell, President, CSU Bakersfield  
Dr. Richard Rush, President, CSU Channel Islands  
Dr. Peter Zingg, President, CSU Chico  
Dr. James E. Lyons, Sr., President, CSU Dominguez Hills  
Dr. John D. Welty, President, CSU Fresno  
Dr. Milton A. Gordon, President, CSU Fullerton  
Dr. Peter Smith, President, CSU Monterey Bay  
Dr. Alexander Gonzalez, President, CSU Sacramento  
Dr. Karen S. Haynes, President, CSU San Marcos  
Dr. Marvalene Hughes, President, CSU Stanislaus  
Dr. Rollin C. Richmond, President, Humboldt State University  
Dr. Stephen L. Weber, President, San Diego State University  
Dr. Don W. Kassing, Interim President, San Jose State University
Proposed Discussion Topics: Facilitating Student Progress to the Baccalaureate Degree

Assumptions.

- Of keen interest is units to degree – much more than time to degree, given that CSU students frequently attend part-time, may stop out, and may win credits from several campuses.

- While we are interested in success stories and best practices, of more interest will be campus reports as to the obstacles that still remain in implementing strong policies and practices that will facilitate graduation.

Topics.

Items 1 - 8 were recommended by the CSU Task Force on Facilitating Graduation in 2003. These proposed actions have since been the subject of surveys directed to campuses, and have been the basis of ongoing reports to Trustees.

See the task force report at http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Reports/FacilitatingGraduation.pdf

What obstacles remain for campus implementation of each of the following?

1. Developing 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation roadmaps for all academic degree programs. These roadmaps should be term-by-term depictions of the courses in which students should enroll over the entirety of their academic careers (general education and major) and should address both day and evening programs when program size is sufficient to support both patterns. After the plans have been developed, they should be accessible to students at feeder community colleges and high schools.

2. Develop and implement projected campus master class schedules designed to accommodate these roadmaps and ensure that required courses will be available during the specified terms.

3. Require a mandatory progress-to-degree audit at a specific checkpoint (such as when a native freshman accumulates 65 semester units or upon entry for a transfer student), followed by the requisite advising and regular updates on the audit.

4. Improve online and hard-copy university catalogues so that they are well designed, well organized, readable, and useful.
5. Use summer term to promote student progress to degree by analyzing student course needs so as to offer a class schedule that enables students to enroll in bottleneck courses and required courses in GE and the major.

Plans should include other strategies appropriate to individual campuses. These could include such strategies as:

6. Offer new students an intensive first-year experience.

7. Expand faculty professional development for improved instructional effectiveness.

8. Improve advising practices.

*Item 9 means to reference tools that campuses may consider in developing strong policies and practices that facilitate efficient progress to the baccalaureate degree.*

9. Review campus policies concerning the conditions under which students may register for courses but not complete them – including the rules under which students may drop or withdraw from courses, may take grades of Incomplete in courses, and/or may repeat courses. As appropriate, develop rules that will carry disincentives to drop / withdrawal / incomplete / repeat choices.

*Item 10 calls forth many opinions. What views do campus interlocutors have concerning the issue?*

10. Develop a system-wide set of rules that raise student fees for units attempted or completed substantially beyond the minimum required to graduate. In other words, charge substantially more for excess units.