Graduation Initiative
Reporting Form
August-Sept 2012

Campus: East Bay

Team Leader: Susan Opp

1. What did your team commit to completing during these months? (What did you promise?)

- Additional Freshman Orientation events, as well as orientation for international students, will be held before the fall quarter starts in late September.
- Block enrollment for all 1500-1600 first-time freshmen in fall classes will be completed before Labor Day. Freshmen will be prohibited from dropping their courses thereby ensuring enrollment in required Freshman Year Experience (cluster) and remediation courses.
- In the first week of fall quarter, a Freshman Convocation event will be held to welcome freshmen to campus and introduce the Freshman Reading for 2012-13, “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks”, by Rebecca Skloot.
- In August, the McNair Scholars will finish their CSUEB MSP Summer Research Course. The course will culminate with their attendance and poster presentation at the Annual UC Berkeley McNair Research Symposium and the submission of a research proposal to McNair staff.
- The McNair Director will moderate and participate in a panel on undergraduate research as part of the Back to the Bay Fall Faculty Orientation. The goal of this session will be to inform faculty about the McNair Scholars Program and other opportunities to work with undergraduates on research and to educate them on the role of the Faculty Mentor.
- The McNair Scholars Program will have the first of their Fall Quarter Meetings for the 2012 cohort. Scholars will hear about upcoming opportunities that are likely to be of interest to the McNair Scholars, including: the Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education; Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program; and CSU Student Research Competition.
- AACE will: 1) continue our series of “Career University” workshops for recent graduates, assisting them in transitioning to the workplace; 2) send two staff members to a professional conference to learn about national foundation-based scholarships for students, in order to expand our services to include this much-needed service; 3) participate in two planning retreats, to develop programs and activities designed to move students more expeditiously toward graduation; 4) continue to work with the New Student Orientation program and the “Smooth Transitions” workshops for incoming Fall quarter students; 5) begin the hiring process for two A2E2-funded positions, to coordinate advising in the new college-based advising centers, and to concentrate specifically on career planning for graduate students; and 6) continue to offer workshops for disqualified (DQ) students and students on academic probation, to encourage them to continue to pursue their higher education plans.
- With the beginning of the fall quarter, the EXCEL program will focus on providing one-on-one counseling to the students but will also hire an A2E2-funded Veteran's Counselor to manage a caseload of students and assist in increasing retention and graduation rates through counseling and advisement, workshops, referrals, and other forms of direct interventions
- All EOP first time freshmen will be required to attend EOP Welcome Day to provide students with a greater understanding of the support and resources within the department, the campus, the requirements for maintaining their EOP grant, as well as an opportunity to meet and get to know their counselors, peer mentors other EOP students.
- Student Academic Services/EOP will: 1) administer the College Student Inventory to all first time freshmen to provide EOP counselors with information regarding the student’s strengths, challenges and motivation and likelihood of drop out; 2) offer Math 911 for all exception admits who are enrolled in the 800 level remedial math to provide supplemental instruction and assist students in passing their remedial classes; 3) provide study tables facilitated by tutors in Pioneer Heights Residence Hall lounge every Sunday and Thursday, and at other locations on campus to serve commuter students, to address the areas
of math, English and Science (Study tables will also be available on campus to offer this service to our commuter students); 4) implement a quarterly workshop series to enhance learning and assist with areas identified that are challenging or part of their developmental process; and 5) hire an additional EOP Counselor to provide advising to a greater number of students, particularly AB 540 students who will be entering the EOP program.

- EOP Peer Mentors will assist first time freshman via a quarterly newsletter, attendance at events, and provision of workshops for their mentees.
- Freshman Peer Mentor services run out of the General Education office will be expanded to include freshmen at the Concord Campus, as well as transfer students.
- Freshmen Peer Mentors will participate in a cultural and educational exchange program with students from Fukuoka Institute of Technology, first for a week at CSUEB and then in Fukuoka, Japan for a week at their university.
- Students will be identified who started at CSUEB as part of the 2008 freshman cohort but either have since stopped attending or have not yet graduated. They will be contacted and offered the PRESS (President’s Re-Entry and Engaged Student Scholarship) to encourage re-entry, successful progress, and graduation.

2. What did you do and how will it help?

New Initiatives:
- Academic Advising and Career Education (AACE) staff members started working with students from the 2008 freshman cohort who are in good academic standing but have not yet graduated, in an effort to ensure that they are on the path to graduation. Students were contacted and individual roadmaps to graduation were prepared. Through the PRESS (President’s Re-Entry and Engaged Student Scholarship) program, these students were offered the opportunity to file for graduation for free and to register for the Writing Skills Test (WST) for free if they participated in a WST prep course and continued to make progress toward graduation in 2012-13.
- With funding from the Academic Access, Enhancement and Excellence (A2E2) program, plans were finalized to implement: a) major advising centers in the colleges, b) a student research office, c) expanded peer mentor services, d) expanded intensive advising services through EOP/Excel, e) enhanced tutoring services, d) increased library hours, e) expanded service learning opportunities, and f) more on and off campus paid student internships. These high impact practices were identified by the Student Success and Assessment Committee (SSAC) as those most likely to directly benefit students.
- Freshmen Peer Mentors traveled to Fukuoka Institute of Technology (FIT) in Japan for a week of cultural exchange after hosting 10 students from FIT at CSUEB for a week. This 2 week event enabled our students to learn more about the culture and higher education system of Japan, and to discover ways to improve their connections with international students at CSUEB.
- All SIRed freshman students were contacted by phone and invited to advising sessions on campus. The small group advising sessions were very successful. A key to the success was including parents. Their questions were answered as they arose so both they and their student left the sessions with as much information as they felt they needed at the time and had a contact person for additional questions that might arise.
- Block enrollment of freshmen:
  - As we had been alerted by sister campuses that tried block enrollment, the wide variety of needs students had, including their remedial status, courses taken at the community colleges while in high school, and AP or IB course credits, meant that many students “fell out” of block registration, making registration involve more manual than automated work for a significant percentage of the freshmen. Further, getting accurate information and documents from incoming freshmen, access to data from Enrollment Services, and information on the students who had not yet taken EPT/ELM, made it necessary to adapt blocks to meet student profiles.
  - Due to the largest freshman class in CSUEB’s history, courses in freshman learning communities were over-loaded, further complicating block enrollment.
Our first experience with block enrollment taught us that we were able to enroll about 80% of the students with no issues. The other 20% needed hand coding and special course blocks. The time it took to get permissions to go over course caps complicated the process as well.

Students attending late orientations were registered much closer to the start of the term than those who attended regular orientations. International students posed little difficulty since they have a freshman learning community designed to support their understanding of US universities and their English language skills. The other students had a longer wait while we identified their skill levels and found space for them in already heavily enrolled learning communities.

We realized that we will be challenged to achieve the goal—students taking all learning community courses during first year—for students with double remediation requirements (both English and Math). To give those students the greatest chances of academic success, we need to limit their enrollments to 12-14 units to assure full-time enrollment without over-enrolling them in classes. If a student needs three quarters of math and English remedial work, they are unlikely to complete either their A1 or Information Literacy courses in the first year.

Nonetheless, the use of block enrollment has three important benefits for the university despite the significant labor involved: 1) Freshmen are assured full-time course loads including remedial courses and at least 3 major and/or GE courses, and will not be able to drop these required courses therefore ensuring attainment of first-year benchmarks. 2) We can give CSUEB colleges and departments participating in the freshmen learning communities accurate information about the demands for particular courses at least one-quarter before the students need the course, resulting in improved course scheduling. 3) As we get better at the process, we will significantly limit the number of course sections that need to be cancelled due to low enrollments thereby optimizing course fill rates. When students enrolled themselves in learning community courses, we had many sections of freshman seminar or cluster courses that had less than optimal enrollments. With block enrollment, most sections will be filled to capacity. The result is that we will be serving more than 300 more students this year than last year at essentially the same instructional cost to the campus.

Improved Advising:
- It was very clear at freshman orientations which students participated in an advising session before attending orientation. They understood what their requirements were and what freshman learning communities were. Those who had their first advising at orientation were far less clear about freshman year requirements, Early Start, or freshman learning communities. If resources allow, we will push advising sessions before orientation much more and offer sessions through Blackboard collaborate for those students who live too far from campus to attend a 2 hour session on campus.
- Peer mentors sponsored a table to encourage new freshmen to come by the peer mentor offices even before school officially started. They asked students to fill out a short questionnaire to identify what supports they might need to make a successful transition to the university. Using the answers collected, the peer mentors and the Peer Mentor Director plan to design programs addressing the needs identified by incoming students.
- All EOP first time freshmen attended EOP Welcome Day. The event provided students with a greater understanding of the support and resources within the department, the campus, the requirements for maintaining their EOP grant, as well as an opportunity to meet and get to know their counselors, peer mentors other EOP students. EOP Peer Mentors conducted workshops on the importance of having peer support and the opportunities continuing students can provide for incoming students.

Enhanced Access and Success:
- About 450 students and their parents joined us for Freshman Convocation on September 25th in our Dining Commons where students and their families served themselves dinner and met freshman seminar faculty. The Senior Director of Undergraduate Studies talked with families and students about the challenges and opportunities they will all face as their student becomes a more independent young adult. Using the themes in “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks”, the presentation discussed the kinds of complex, critical and creative thinking the university strives to provide for our students. Feedback from
the attendees indicated that the event was received as a positive opportunity to make a difficult transition for both family members and their students to life at the university.

- Student Academic Services/EOP: 1) administered the College Student Inventory to all first time freshmen to provide EOP counselors with information regarding the student’s strengths, challenges and motivation and likelihood of drop out; 2) offered Math 911 for all exception admits who are enrolled in the 800 level remedial math to provide supplemental instruction and assist students in passing their remedial classes; 3) provided study tables, facilitated by tutors, in Pioneer Heights Residence Hall lounge every Sunday and Thursday, and at other locations on campus to serve commuter students, to address the areas of math, English and Science (Study tables will also be available on campus to offer this service to our commuter students.); 4) implemented a quarterly workshop series to enhance learning and assist with areas identified that are challenging or part of their developmental process; and 5) hired an additional EOP Counselor to provide advising to a greater number of students, particularly AB 540 students who will be entering the EOP program.

- EOP Peer Mentors assisted first time freshman via individual meetings, email updates, attendance at events, and provision of workshops for their mentees. During their meetings, Peer Mentors set EOP students up with a study schedule, provided tips on how to manage their time, made referral to tutoring resources, and supported them on their transition to CSU East Bay.

- In the Renaissance Scholars Program (RSP), 12 new students (former foster youth) were enrolled: 9 freshman and 3 transfer students. RSP conducted a 4-day RSP Orientation (including a BBQ). The 7 RS freshmen that moved into the residence halls were provided with move in packages that included RSP laundry bags, toiletries and household supplies provided by John Burton Foundation. All new RSP and qualifying continuing RSP students were provided with a $200 stipend for textbooks.

- EXCEL Program staff reviewed policies and planned activities for fall quarter. Results from a survey conducted by EXCEL were used to plan workshops in academic year 2012/13. The most popular topics were related to graduate school, i.e., “Writing your graduate/professional school personal statement”, and “Applying for graduate/professional school.” Preparing for graduate/professional school exams (i.e. GRE, GMAT) and obtaining assistance in writing a scholarship personal statement were also very popular topics among respondents. Another area of interest included study skills and how to improve GPA.

- EXCEL activities in September focused on providing counseling to new and continuing students. Sixty-two new students have joined EXCEL since September 1, 2012.

- The McNair Scholars participated in their CSUEB MSP Summer Research Course, and attended and presented their research at the Annual UC Berkeley McNair Research Symposium.

- Academic Advising and Career Education (AACE): completed the “Career University” series of workshops for recent graduates, presenting an array of career decision-making skills; sent two staff members to a NAFA conference for training in assisting students in applying for national foundation-based scholarships; held a two-day planning retreat in Berkeley, to develop programming and activities for the new academic year; and continued to work with the New Student Orientation program and the “Smooth Transitions” workshops for incoming Fall quarter students.

3. **What will you accomplish in the next two months?**

- Continue block enrollment of freshmen in winter and spring quarters. We will work closely with Planning and Enrollment Management to make certain information on prior credit and student status is easily available. We will identify those students who may need special handling to improve the speed and ease of block registration.

- Monitor student success in the learning communities through intensive work in freshman seminars. This year we are emphasizing realities of university life and more closely monitoring student success.

- Form a new subcommittee of the Student Success and Assessment Committee (SSAC) to review and revise web information for prospective freshman and transfer students to streamline the number of pages a student needs to review to get all the information about admissions, financial aid, housing, advising, and requirements.
• Continue to assess the impact of peer mentors on the freshmen in their learning communities and plan for ways to expand peer mentoring to include transfer students and veterans.

• Midterm Progress Reports will be requested of all faculty who have EOP students that fall under one of the following categories: First-time freshman, enrolled in remedial classes, or on academic probation. In October, counselors will EOP students to have them make appointments for Winter Registration. Additionally, in October EOP will conducted workshops that include: Exploring the Library, Time Management, Exploring Graduate School Options, Support Workshop, Study Tables, Budgeting Basics, and De-Stress workshops that include Yoga, Healthy Eating, and exercising properly. Workshops will continue through December.

• Peer Mentors will continue meeting with their freshmen students through October and November.

• EOP Admissions will a create a Step by Step flyer on “How to Apply” to the EOP Program and lay out instructions on the EOP Website. EOP will conduct presentations to community organizations such as, College Track, Youth Radio on the EOP application process and requirements. EOP Admissions will continue reaching out to high school counselors regarding EOP requirements and deadlines. EOP admissions has also scheduled, in November, more outreach presentations to seniors in local high schools and community organizations throughout the Bay Area that work with many low-income and first generation students. Additionally, EOP has created an EOP Application Day on November 28, 2012, where interested EOP students will be given a presentation on EOP resources and then taken to a computer lab to help them begin the EOP Application Process.

• The Renaissance Scholars Program plans to conduct an Explore the Bay trip to San Francisco’s International Hip-Hop Dance competition.

• URM students from EOP, EXCEL, and McNair will attend The California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education at San Francisco State University.

• Student Retention Services units and Peer Mentors will participate in the “Al Fresco” in October to promote their programs and recruit new students.

• EXCEL will provide a workshop on financial aid and promoted among EXCEL students workshops and services offered by other University departments and colleges.

• EXCEL will expand its services to counseling for veteran students by hiring a new counselor. The veteran students will receive holistic counseling to assist them with adjustment to the university environment, help develop academic plan, and identify resources that they might need to address personal and psychological issues.

• Hold a University Undergraduate Advising Council (UUAC) meeting for all faculty and staff to discuss changes to application deadlines, application limits for Spring 2013, enrollment processes and limits to units, SB 1440, and Early Start, among other topics.

• Student Success and Assessment Committee (SSAC) will meet every other week to discuss plans for improving student success, especially through the University-wide Activities Program (UAP) made possible by the Academic Access, Enhancement and Excellence (A2E2) program.

• AACE will begin informal “meet and greet” events for students to interact with employers in an unstructured setting. These “Foot In The Door” events will take place about twice a month.

• AACE will: hold a Resume Blast event in advance of the fall Career Fair. Employers are invited to come in and offer quick advice to students about the content of their resume; reach out to Colleges, in an effort to co-sponsor winter career fairs; reinstitute workshops on a weekly basis for career preparation; and hold a “Strictly Sophomores” event for second-year students who are generally forgotten by institutions, which tend to lavish their attention on first-year students and those ready to graduate.