CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY

CLOSING THE GRADUATION GAP – A Working Action Plan

Cal State East Bay is committed to improving graduation rates for all segments of its student population. During the WASC re-accreditation process in 2007, we established the Student Success and Assessment Committee (SSAC) which is co-chaired by the Provost and the Vice President for Planning, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs. This committee, with members from Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, General Education, Retention Services, the Academic Senate, Associated Students Inc., and other student advising and enrollment groups on campus, has taken the lead in development of our graduation plan.

According to the data provided by the CSU, the graduation rate for all students at Cal State East Bay is 3.5 percentage points below the top quartile for comparison institutions. The data also show that there is a very small gap for non-underrepresented minorities (non-URM), whereas underrepresented minorities (URM) have a 5 percentage point graduation gap. As a result, our plan pays particular attention to closing the graduation gap for underrepresented minorities at Cal State East Bay while ultimately raising the graduation rate of all 2009 cohort groups by 6 percentage points. Specifically, our goals are to increase the 6-year graduation rate of URM first-time freshmen from 42% in 2011 to 48% in 2015, and of non-URM first-time freshmen from 46% in 2011 to 52% in 2015. For transfer students, our goals are to increase the 6-year graduation rate of URM students from 66% in 2011 to 72% in 2015, and of non-URM transfer students from 71% in 2011 to 75% in 2015.

Our proposed actions fall into two broad categories: expansion of current efforts, and new efforts. Examples of these efforts are:

- Centralization and coordination of student advising;
- Seek funding for expansion of high impact advising programs with focus on URM students;
- Enforcement of admission requirements;
- Production of skeletal annual course schedules and degree roadmaps.

Graduation initiative efforts will result in:

- Enhanced access: adding sections of high demand courses; reducing numbers of credits at registration; creating “block” enrollment for freshmen;
- Improved advising: increasing communication to targeted student groups; requiring declaration of major; ongoing training for professional and faculty advisors;
- Direction of Federal stimulus funds toward the above.

Metrics used to measure progress will include:

- Annual analyses of retention data for first-time freshmen and transfer students;
- Assessment of data on student advising center usage;
- Surveys of student satisfaction with and knowledge of advising services;
- Graduation rate analyses for first-time freshmen and transfer students.