

# GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025 TASKFORCE

## Meeting Notes

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

ADM Room 101

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

### Present:

Vikash Lakhani, David Schechter, Debra Jackson, Denise Romero, Dwayne Cantrell, Faust Gorham, James Drnek, Jennifer McCune, Kris Krishnan, Liora Gubkin, Lisa Zuzarte, Luis Vega, Michael Lukens, Nyakundi Michieka, Aaron Wan, Tanya Boone-Holladay, Sarah Hendrik, Deisy Mascarinas (Administrative Support).

### Absent:

Deborah Boschini, Doreen Anderson-Facile, and Jaimi Paschal.

### Action Items:

- Vikash will draft something on how the (\$50k) grant will look and work with GI members on the parameters of the grant.
- Vikash will work on a summary document of all the student success initiatives, as requested by the WSCUC team. As well as the poster that will be presented at the poster session during the WSCUC visit.
- D. Jackson will email everyone the full list of WSCUC visitors and the list of GI Taskforce members that will meet with the visitors. She will also send out an announcement about the open meetings with the Faculty, Staff, and Students.
- V. Lakhani is putting together an early graduation award for students who graduate within 7 terms or earlier.

### GI Funds for Taskforce:

- Provost will be allocating \$50,000 from the graduation initiative monies that come from the Chancellor's office. We have to work on how we want to utilize these funds. Ideas from the taskforce include:
  - Calling for mini grants from campus and get campus involvement with the taskforce and initiative. For example, \$3-\$5k mini grants or up the amount to \$5-\$10k grants.
  - Fix it grants- Seniors who are here on their final semester and need extra funds for books, or anything that would help them get to graduation.
  - Supplemental Instruction. It has been extremely successful in Math and Early Start Programs.
  - Faculty to work with IRPA on data.
  - Peoplesoft module - invest in academic requirements page.
  - Equity-minded pedagogies and strengthening of faculty learning communities. (suggestion #5 from Chancellor's Office, included in the handout that was provided in the meeting).
  - Chatbot for students who are close to graduating.
- Members asked where the previous money has been spent. Also questioned, was whether we have seen beneficial results from previous efforts.
  - Summer grants helped 11 students. \$8-\$9k was used on summer grants. This initiative can possibly continue for winter intersession.
  - Graduation action teams that reached out to students had a great impact on our rates.
  - The retention initiative that was piloted last term showed some promise, but more time was needed. However, it did bump our retention rate up about 1%.
- ASI gave out 21 scholarships last year and received 200 applications from students. They have a general idea about how many students need money, not just for education but for personal needs or emergencies.
- It was mentioned that there would be money allocated for strengthening the academic piece in housing, aside from the grants.
- Possibly roll out grant in the Spring or it may roll over to the next academic year.

- It was recommended that we analyze data to see what initiatives have worked in the past and new initiatives that prove to be successful, so we can continue to put money towards those initiatives. As well as continue working with peer mentor programs and use AdmitHub to ask the initial questions to students who are running into issues.

### **Graduation Initiative Progress:**

- Achievement Gap Report was presented by V. Lakhani.
  - URM Achievement Gap Goals:
    - Freshman 4-year graduation goal- reach 30% by 2025. (2021 cohort)
    - Freshman 6-year graduation goal- reach 56% by 2025. (2019 cohort)
    - 2-year Transfer graduation goal- reach 48% by 2025.
    - 4-year Transfer graduation goal- reach 74% by 2025.
- Freshman 2015 cohort- at the end of Spring 2019 the predicted number is 17.5%. The official file has gone to the Chancellor's Office, but we haven't received their calculation. We are hoping we are accurate in our calculation, but it may be a point off. It's below the targeted goal for this year, but it is progress. Last year we were at 14.7%. The Chancellor's office will still show us in the red. However, they mention in their report that even though they are measuring us in goals, as long as we're making progress, we are helping students.
- Tactics other schools have used to reach their target include – Graduation action teams, intrusive advising, graduation specialists, Chatbot, and push messages.
- Graduation Goals (predicted numbers):
  - Freshman 6-year- we will be at 42.7% and we were at 42.1% last year.
  - 2-year Transfer- we will be at 45% from 44%, and it will hopefully put us in the green.
  - 4-year Transfer- We will be at 73% from 69.7%.
- URM (Under-Represented Minorities) Equity Gap- we will be at 2.8% and we were at 4.3%. Non-URM students are graduating at a higher rate than URM students.
- First Generation is being tracked separately. They are not on the dashboards because we aren't being measured for that population, but there is a gap.
- When students decline to state their ethnicity it counts against us because they are counted as Non-URM when they can be counted as URM. At least over 100 students in this cohort have declined to state their ethnicity. If we can get students to declare their ethnicity, we can get more accurate data. If half of them would have declared, that would've closed the gap. It is an area we can look in to. Having multiple races is considered Non-URM.
- Pell vs. Non-Pell: We went from 4.3% to 4.6% gap, so it increased. Undocumented students are considered Non-Pell and we have a large population of undocumented students, which can be affecting our rates. As well as, the fact that students must receive Pell in the first term of their cohort to be counted as Pell students. If students receive Pell in subsequent terms they are not counted as Pell students anymore.
- A graduate student in the EDD Program is working with D. Jackson on a study about students on academic probation and what they say was the leading cause of their getting disqualified, when they reapply. The AARC has also been giving surveys to the students at the academic workshops to get their view on what the primary cause of what their grade issues are.
- Universities have used certain strategies to help their rates. For students who had factors that put them at risk for academic probation, they waited to admit them until the spring term rather than the fall term so they wouldn't be in the cohort. They could then focus on what these students needed without the pressure of the initiative. The other strategy used was to start these students with 9 units so that they weren't in full time status and not in the cohort. This may help students more to build on their success rather than failing out.
  - Analytic data in blackboard can provide a predictor on applicants coming in that tells us their risk factor as high, medium, or low based on national data.
  - There may be many implications in trying to implement the strategies mentioned, and it will need to be carefully reviewed.

- D. Jackson provided the group with WSCUC Lines of Inquiry in preparation for the upcoming WSCUC visit on October 7 – 10<sup>th</sup>. They asked to meet with the Graduation Initiative Taskforce and the group can expect an invitation to meet with the team on Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m. in the DLDC Aera Room.
- The WSCUC team will likely be asking questions that have to do with the 2<sup>nd</sup> LOI “Student Success Initiatives.” The handout has questions in bold and a draft of some answers in regular font to provide the taskforce with information so they can provide answers to the questions the team will ask during their visit.
- The team requested a summary document of all the student success initiatives and a status update, which the taskforce will need to work on, collaboratively.
- D. Jackson mentions that there will be a poster session during the visit, and we should provide a poster showing all of the student success initiatives. The WSCUC big question is, how do we decide which things to invest in and how do we know which one of these things is working.
- The WSCUC visitors mentioned are Fran, Terry, and Melanie.

### **EM Updates:**

- D. Cantrell shares with the group that today (9/17/19) they began the de-enrollment for non-payment, for students who had debts at a certain level, and we might be hearing from students. A week ago, there were about 800 students that were on the list to get de-enrolled, but after phone calls and efforts of many teams, that number dropped to less than 300 students.
- The financial threshold for students was \$100, so if the students owed \$100 or more, they would be de-enrolled. EM was able to get the financial threshold up to \$500 and that lines up well with GI 2025 as an administrative barrier. The numbers are continuing to go down and we will continue to make phone calls because we also don’t want the University to go into debt either.

### **Registrar’s Office/ALT Updates:**

- J. McCune shares with the team that they were able to change the threshold for when students are eligible to apply for graduation from 90 units down to 84 units, but we are still searching for the right number. We don’t want students to apply too early because then were doing a grad check response that has the entire plan on it. Moving the units down allows the student who is going to try and overload or try and take more than 15 units per semester to finish up their senior year. Advisors can contact the registrar office and let them know which students need to manually have this change made on their plan. This plan will continue to be monitored closely.
- The student success network received information today about the de-registration process. Advisors get the calls from students who are frantic, so they have the information to be able to get the students back into their classes over the next week.
- Students were notified and dropped today (9/17/19), however, there was communication sent out to them via email, phone calls, and text messages in the previous weeks. The students are also notified of the reinstatement process which allows them to have an additional week if they can get the funds to pay their balance or what their balance would have been when they were registered.
- For students who wish to do the reinstatement process, there is a simple form they can obtain from the Registrar’s office. The form needs to get stamped by Student Financial Services and then they can get re-enrolled. Students have until census day to submit the form and that is a firm deadline this term. However, if someone goes to the counter and wishes to speak to J. McCune she will still meet with them. The form must be submitted in a hard copy at the Registrar’s office or for AV it can be done via email with Melissa Miller. The student must sign the form because they are acknowledging that they get a \$25 late registration fee and acknowledge that they will get re-enrolled to all of their classes. The form will only require their own signature and from Student Financial Services.
- There was a phenomenon happening where students were getting dropped for non-payment and they were going to class and at the end of the term based on their grade they would decide which classes they would pay for. Those students don’t count in our enrollment numbers or in the reports sent to the Chancellor’s Office.
- There is a payment plan that Julie Oberlies is working on and D. Cantrell will be meeting with her and her team to discuss what this will look like moving forward.

### **General Updates for the Taskforce:**

- a. **Early Grad Award:** There are several students who graduate before 4 years. In this past cohort there were about 80 students who graduated in 3 or in 3.5 years. V. Harper talked to the President about this and they want to recognize these students so that other students can get an incentive to graduate early if they can. V. Harper has asked V. Lakhani to put together an early graduation award. For students who qualify, we are looking at providing free graduation regalia, free graduation cord, an early grad certificate and possibly a designation on their transcript as an early grad recipient. We are also planning on a graduation lunch or dinner with the President and other leaders where they will be provided with this award. We are looking to see if they graduated in 7 terms or earlier regardless of where they started. It may roll out by the Fall commencement.
- b. **AskRowdy:** Beginning this year, we have started to implement a Chatbot which is called AskRowdy and it is available for Freshman, Sophomore, and first year Transfers only. We went through a testing phase and every 15 minutes the Chatbot would say "Ask me a question," because that is how it learns. It works like a text message and for the students who are able to use it (Freshman, Sophomore, first year Transfers) they will be invited to this chatbot and they will receive a message letting them know that they have this service available. Only those students can text to this chatbot. There will be a campaign for this. If there is a question that the chatbot can't answer they have live folks behind the scenes monitoring these questions and they escalate it to a certain department. The message will go out in email form to a respected person and when the person answers it through that then the chatbot learns that answer. If anyone mentions anything about assault it goes directly to the University police.
- The First Year Experience (GE) is funding this but if we see results this group can expand it to students who are about to graduate. We can then cover the cost with the allocation that has been given to us.
  - Brian can be contacted if you're interested in using the chatbot.

#### **Alumni Relations/Graduation Initiative:**

- Sarah Hendrick shared with the group that she is part of the CSU Alumni counsel and twice a year the Alumni Directors and Volunteers meet and share information regarding GI 2025. She is learning a lot more about it and wanted to hear more about what we were doing on our campus and to see how the Alumni Association can help improve our graduation rates.
- Their mentor program is going into their 4<sup>th</sup> cycle. It is not based on Academics and they are not working with Faculty, but they are seeing successes. Alumni mentors are helping impact students and they are receiving professional development advice that they may not be getting elsewhere. Some students have gotten internships and jobs because of the program. They have now started collaborating with CECE.
- Currently there are over 53,000 alumni at CSUB. S. Hendrick mentioned that her dream would be that every student on campus has a mentor and alumni to help them on their path. Some students feel that they have to get a job that lines up exactly with their major and it can get confusing and scary because they haven't reached that step, but mentors help answer many of their questions.
- If we target URM students with URM Alumni we could be able to provide a human connection where the students can see someone that looks like them, has the same experiences, and who's graduated and moved on to be a professional. This may apply to students on probation or high-risk students as well.
- Some departments have profession classes for sophomores. It was suggested that maybe in the profession classes there's a way for mentors to get involved with the curriculum.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.**