

July 29, 2016

Response Due September 2, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: CSU Presidents

FROM: Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D.
Executive Vice Chancellor



SUBJECT: Call for Campus Student Success Plans Pursuant to AB 1602

The CSU is committed to the success of our students. We successfully completed the first phase of our Graduation Initiative that began in 2009, exceeding our goals. We have been in the process of reviewing our goals for a next phase.

Assembly Bill 1602

This summer, Assembly Bill 1602 was signed by Governor Brown and will allocate one-time \$35 million to the CSU in 2016-17 contingent upon certification by the Director of Finance, no later than September 30, 2016, that the CSU has adopted plans for the CSU and for each campus that specify timeframes by which all of following will occur:

- Raise the four-year graduation rate for students entering CSU as freshmen “above the four-year graduation rate for students at other postsecondary educational institutions,”
- Raise the two-year graduation rate for students entering CSU as transfers “above the two-year graduation rate for students at other postsecondary educational institutions,” and
- Raise freshman and transfer rates for students from low-income, first generation and underrepresented minority groups to at least the rates for students at the university who are not from any of these groups.

Goals

This summer, we convened an Advisory Committee to provide help establishing goals. The Advisory Committee was very engaged and very helpful. We reviewed considerable information with the Advisory Committee including:

CSU Campuses
Bakersfield
Channel Islands
Chico
Dominguez Hills
East Bay

Fresno
Fullerton
Humboldt
Long Beach
Los Angeles
Maritime Academy

Monterey Bay
Northridge
Pomona
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego

San Francisco
San José
San Luis Obispo
San Marcos
Sonoma
Stanislaus

- Projected shortfalls in California college graduates from the Public Policy Institute of California, California Competes, and others;
- National averages of graduation rates;
- Comparisons of student success rates on CSU campuses to those of peer institutions;
- Stretch goals provided by the Presidents for their campuses;
- The Chancellor's commitment to bring achievement gaps to zero by 2025;
- Consideration of campus level goals on the achievement of system level goals.

The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of setting goals in a way that is sensitive to the mix of students unique to each campus. A member of the Advisory Committee suggested using information from peer institutions available on the Education Trust web site, College Results Online. The Advisory Committee studied peer data and recommended that goals be set based on top peer institutions together with the peer trends in improvement. This suggestion served as the basis for respective campus freshman goals. Similar national data was not available for transfers, so those rates were based on current campus rates and thoughtful consideration of what may be possible. Goals for all achievement gaps are zero as announced by Chancellor White previously. Please find respective campus goals attached along with more detail on goal-setting methodology.

Plans

Legislation also requires that we articulate plans and a timeline. We have selected 2025 as the target date. We need to articulate both long-term plans to 2025 and specific strategies to be implemented in 2016-17 with the \$35 million. Of course, it is unlikely that we can have a large impact on the rates and gaps in one year, but we can begin to deploy targeted efforts with this (initially) one-time funding.

Attached is a template for campus plans. We reviewed drafts of the template with the Advisory Committee but subsequent discussions with the Governor's and DOF staffs prompted revisions. The template asks both for a long-term plan, described in broad terms, covering the period to 2025 and a short-term plan identifying specific strategies for 2016-17.

The very helpful and productive discussions with the Graduation Initiative Advisory Committee this summer identified a particular immediate opportunity. About 4,000 CSU students appear to be on track to graduate in 4.5 years and moving that group to four years would raise our freshman graduation rate by about 8 percentage points. This may be our "low hanging fruit" with respect to four year rates and we have determined to focus 2016-17 efforts on this key opportunity.

Please review the instructions for suggestions regarding how to prepare your plans to meet what we understand to be the expectations of the DOF and Governor's staffs. Please provide a campus plan to my office by September 2nd following the attached template.

Funding

The \$35 million appropriated in Assembly Bill No. 1602 “shall be used only for the costs of implementing the plans specified ... to increase the four-year graduation rate and two-year graduation rate at the university.”

For purposes of this plan, we assume that \$35 million will be provided by the State in 2016-17 and allocated among campuses. We do not yet have a per-campus funding allocation methodology. Although funding in AB 1602 is one time, we are hopeful that the \$35 million or more could become an annual allocation to address student success. Governor’s staff members have recommended that we plan ambitiously for the 2025 goals and “demonstrate what we can achieve”; this may be an encouraging signal. Of course, we will be seeking continued funding to support efforts from 2017-2025.

Mission

At least part of the purpose of emphasizing four year freshman and two year transfer rates has to do with access. If we can graduate more students in a timelier manner, we will open space for new students. Access is a cornerstone of the CSU mission. The additional students and eventual additional graduates will contribute to filling the state’s need for college graduates.

As we develop these plans, we must remain mindful of CSU’s mission of “access to success.” We will remain accessible to the diverse next generation of young Californians *and* we will sustain high academic rigor. Neither access nor excellence will be compromised. Instead we will pioneer a model of inclusive academic excellence for our diverse students.

Further Planning

Although we have to respond on a very short timeline to the expectations of the Governor’s Office, we expect to have more extended planning conversations this fall to refine our plans for the coming decade. In spring 2017, we hope to have revised, more in-depth plans for each campus.

Thank you very much in advance for your support and cooperation.

Attachment

c: Chancellor Timothy P. White

California State University
Campus Student Success Plan Template
Due September 2nd, 2016

General Instructions

AB 1602 requires that we identify “Specific actions to be taken by the campus” to achieve 2025 goals. Please review all the information following for guidance in preparing plans. Please place your plan into the following outline on 6-7 pages.

1. Identifying information (header on top of first page)
2. Long Term Plan (suggested length, three pages)
3. Rationale (one page)
4. Objectives (half page)
5. Timeline (half page)
6. Short term 2016-17 strategies (one page)

Please use 1 inch margins and 12 point fonts for body text. Please number pages bottom center.

Identifying Information (header on top of first page)

On top of the first page, please identify the campus, provide a campus contact for the campus plan (name, title, email, phone number), and dated presidential signature approval.

Long Term Plan (suggested length, three pages)

Provide an overview of the long-term campus plan to improve graduation rates and numbers and to close achievement gaps for freshmen and transfer students by 2025. Identify campus policies that may influence the work. Organize your narrative by describing plans to strengthen campus processes for at least five or six of the following areas between now and 2025. It is strongly recommended that enrollment management and advising and be addressed among your topics. Addressing data capabilities is also recommended.

- Enrollment management (e.g., ensuring that all needed sections are offered based on student outstanding requirements from degree planners) from recruitment to graduation
- Advising (e.g., more proactive and intrusive, predictive analytics)
- Data capabilities to disaggregate and use student progress data by race, gender, first generation, underrepresented and socioeconomic status
- Campus planning, organizing and communicating to foster a culture of student success
- The first year for freshmen and transfers
- General support services (e.g., supplemental instruction, tutoring)
- Targeted support services for first generation, low-income and underrepresented students (e.g., men’s success, Dream Center, etc.)
- Best practices in benchmarking curriculum against appropriate peer curricula
- Success in low completion rate courses
- Digital learning to engage students and expand access (without the need for physical space)

- The link between tenure track hiring and student success
- Work with K-12 and community colleges to improve college-going and transfer
- Remediation in math and English to support student success
- Physical spaces to support student success

For each, indicate what support will be required. Approximate information, such as “support for hiring 15-20 additional advisors,” is adequate at this stage. Having categories into which we can organize campus plans will facilitate our efforts to develop a persuasive narrative about the campus plans.

Rationale for Long Term Plan (one page)

Explain why you believe that your long-term campus plan will improve four year graduation for freshman entrants and/or two year graduation for transfers and/or close achievement gaps at these four and two year points. Make reference to relevant evidence, if possible.

It is important that campus plans demonstrably address four and two year rates and gaps. In many cases, the rationale will be widely understood by educators; for example, advising is a key strategy linked to student progress. In other cases, the rationale may be less widely understood; for example, offering online courses can be a way to encourage higher unit load, accelerating progress, without the need for students to fit classes into an already packed weekly schedule. In all cases, please assume that the *readers do not already understand* the rationale and do articulate a brief rationale; as a portion of our task is educational.

Objectives Long Term Plan (half page)

Describe key specific measurable objectives to 2025. For a decade-long plan, there eventually will be many specific objectives; please select just a few key objectives that are demonstrably relevant to the goals. (Examples: second or third year retention is a good predictor of eventual graduation rates; increased unit accumulation or increased student unit load are relevant to quicker graduation.)

Timeline Long Term Plan (half page)

Provide a timeline to 2025 including implementation milestones and target dates for improvement of objectives. Again, for a decade-long plan there eventually will be many timeline milestones; please select just a few that are demonstrably relevant to the goals. (Example: deploying analytic capabilities that allow the campus to identify projected time to degree for sophomores, juniors and seniors in order to guide advising interventions would be relevant to key goals.)

Short Term Strategies for 2016-17 (one page)

Briefly describe your campus plan to identify and work with freshman-entrant students who are now juniors or seniors and are not far from a four year graduation plan or transfers who are not far from a two year plan and move those students to a four year or two year degree.

The very helpful and productive discussions with the Graduation Initiative Advisory Committee this summer identified a particular opportunity. About 4,000 CSU students appear to be on track to graduate in 4.5 years. Moving that group to four years, reducing only one semester, would raise our freshman graduation rate by about 8%. This may be our “low hanging fruit” with respect to four year rates. In allocating 2016-17 funds, we will focus on supporting plans to identify and work with freshman-entrant students who are now juniors or seniors and are not far from a four year graduation plan or transfers who are not far from a two year plan. Campuses might use analytics to identify students, mount proactive advising to work closely with identified students, seek to ensure that students are taking the courses that efficiently move them toward graduation, encourage increased average unit load in the academic year, encourage summer school or winter session course taking, and perhaps offer incentives in the form of reduced tuition or registration priority.