

California State University, Stanislaus
Student Success and Completion Initiatives Plan
October 5, 2015

Executive Summary

California State University, Stanislaus has a long-standing institutional commitment to student achievement and learning. Student success is widely recognized as essential to the realization of the University's mission and has been the focal point of various activities over the past several years. The Trustees' funding for Student Success and Completion Initiatives will contribute important new resources to our ongoing efforts.

Through numerous student success programs, Stanislaus State employs high-impact practices to support student achievement. Participation in STEM majors, for example, has been encouraged through programs that provide mentoring and undergraduate research opportunities to enrich the student experience. The First Year Experience (FYE) programming has been recently revitalized through a stretch English class. In this program, students progress as a cohort through a series of two English courses and receive intensive advising and supplemental workshops on various student success topics. Intensive advising has also been a central focus of other campus programs and has led to a better understanding of the benefits of coordinating interventions among faculty, staff, and peer mentors.

Stanislaus State has initiated student success programs targeting at-risk sophomores, student veterans, and AB 540 students. Important contributions have also been made through smaller projects within many academic departments, including mentoring programs, an online writing center, and an online homework support program, to name a few. In addition, the campus has also recently reintroduced supplemental instruction to support student achievement in high-risk, bottleneck courses. This initiative has grown over the past three years with more faculty introducing this high-impact practice into their courses.

Another recent, critical campus initiative entails the comprehensive review of academic advising. In the fall of 2014, Stanislaus State convened a task force to review best practices and make recommendations for improvements to the existing structure of academic advising and the services offered in various departments. This initiative has prompted widespread discussions and a renewed interest in building more effective advising practices throughout the campus. This review is timely and will inform many of the new investments proposed below.

The outcomes of these and other efforts have been promising. Key indicators of success include improving graduation rates and a reduction in the achievement gap between underrepresented minority (URM) and non-underrepresented minority (Non-URM) groups. Significantly, the overall six-year graduation rates for Stanislaus State have improved steadily in recent years, increasing from 49.5% for

the 2003 cohort to 53.5% for the 2008 cohort. Similarly, the six-year URM and non-URM graduation rate gap has declined to 2%, making the gap at Stanislaus State substantially lower than the CSU system average.

These promising outcomes have been achieved even while the student demographic profile of the campus has changed in recent years and presented new challenges. A growing proportion of first-time freshmen are first-generation students from low-income, URM families. Between 2003 and 2008, the number of first-time freshmen (FTF) URM students, as a percentage of all FTF, grew from 32.3% to 42.6% respectively. The proportion of first-time freshmen that are first-generation college students also grew in this period, increasing from 39.8% to 50.8%. In addition, the percentage of low-income students (Pell recipients) increased from 40% to 62.9%. These data suggest that Stanislaus State's efforts to increase the college-going rate in the local region have been successful.

Guiding this success has been the strong working relationship we have helped to establish with local partners to improve college readiness in the Stanislaus region. The Stanislaus Education Partnership, comprised of representatives from Stanislaus State, the Stanislaus County Office of Education, and Modesto Junior College, has committed to improving the academic preparation, college-going, retention and graduation rates of regional students. While Stanislaus State has always attracted large numbers of first-generation, low-income, URM students and we are currently well positioned to meet their needs, the new resources provided by the Trustees' Initiatives will allow us to strengthen the intensive support necessary to successfully transition these students into the University and position them to thrive academically.

It is within this context of institutional opportunities and activities that we propose to invest new resources in the following areas.

- Hire key faculty to improve our ability to provide high-demand courses and sections in a strategic fashion.
- Continue to address high-risk, high failure rate bottleneck courses in various majors. Analyze course-taking trends, failure rates, and other assessments to inform intervention strategies in these courses. These strategies will include supplemental instruction support, intensive advising, peer mentoring, and other high-impact practices.
- Further develop academic support programs such as academic advising, tutor training, supplemental instruction, and other strategic interventions to better support student achievement.
- Expand the capacity of the campus writing center to provide writing and editorial support for students individually and in groups.

- Develop a Math Center to increase competency in math and provide tutorial support and developmental resources.
- Develop affinity groups for incoming freshmen to form learning communities upon entry into the University.
- Further develop and refine the University’s information support system to provide the tools and information necessary to identify and provide meaningful interventions for all students and especially struggling students.

Proposed Expenditures

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Trustee Initiative 1: Tenure-Track Faculty Hiring | \$320,000 |
| Trustee Initiative 2: Enhanced Advising | 267,000 |
| Trustee Initiative 3: Augment Bottleneck Solutions Initiative | 122,000 |
| Trustee Initiative 4: Student Preparation | no new investment |
| Trustee Initiative 5: High Impact Practices for Student Retention | 10,000 |
| Trustee Initiative 6: Data-Driven Decision Making | <u>90,000</u> |
| Total | \$809,000 |

**Trustee Initiative 1: Tenure-Track Faculty Hiring
Budget – \$320,000**

- Leverage the Student Success and Completion Initiative funding relative to the goal of an improved ratio of permanent to temporary faculty. Combine funding for new permanent faculty hires with the conversion of temporary faculty to hire several probationary (permanent) faculty.

Short-Term Metric: Number of new Tenure/Tenure-Track searches to be conducted as a result of this funding.

Long-Term Metric: Increase in tenure/tenure-track faculty in high demand areas.

**Trustee Initiative 2: Enhanced Advising
Budget – \$267,000**

- Hire additional academic advisors.
- Continue the “Commons” advising support concept in the College of Science. Create a similar “Commons” advising support area in the College of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.
- Increase cohort peer support programs.

- Expand FYE programming.
- Expand tutoring services.
- Provide Advising Excellence Awards for staff and faculty.
- Develop advising training programs.
- Complete an annual advising assessment, including a satisfaction survey and summit campus meeting.

Short-Term Metric: An increase in the number of new professional advisors and/or faculty who engage in advising. Improvements in the outcomes of the annual advising satisfaction surveys of student/faculty/staff (in an advising role). Conduct an annual advising “summit” every year early in the fall semester or spring semester to review the results of the survey and other short-term measures of advising efficacy with the goal of continuous improvement.

Long-Term Metric: Reduction in the average time to degree.

**Trustee Initiative 3: Augment Bottleneck Solutions Initiative
Budget – \$122,000**

- Hire an analyst for schedule monitoring and improvement.
- Hire a Supplemental Instruction Coordinator.
- Provide faculty support for course redesign.

Short-Term Metric: Additional number of course sections (online, in person, or hybrid) addressed as a result of this funding. Fewer bottleneck courses, more redesigned courses, and improved DWF rates on bottleneck courses.

Long-Term Metric: Reduction in number of lower-division units earned by upper-division students.

**Trustee Initiative 4: Student Preparation
Total Base Budget and One-time funding \$0 – current programming is productive and funding for programs is sufficient.**

Short-Term Metric: The number of students successfully completing Early Start and Summer Bridge. The number of student successfully completing Math remediation in the summer as an extension of Early Start and/or Summer Bridge.

Long-Term Metric: Reduction in the number and percentage of students who begin fall term of the freshman year needing pre-college coursework in English and math. For those students that need pre-college coursework at the start of

their freshman fall semester, a reduction in the amount of pre-college coursework needed.

Stanislaus State has a number of effective student preparation initiatives, and current funding levels are sufficient to maintain good progress. For example, Stanislaus State has very successfully implemented the Early Start program. Most students have gone beyond taking the one-unit Early Start class (30% enroll in a one-unit class and 70% enroll in a four-unit class). Students completing four-unit Early Start Math (ESM) classes (ESM 103 and ESM 106) advance to the next course level at an 81-85% success rate. Similarly, Summer Bridge currently serves 40 students who take the first course of the English stretch sequence, ENGL 1006 (fulfills GE Area E1), in the summer and receive math tutoring. These students advance to ENGL 1007 (which fulfills GE Area A2) in the fall as a cohort with the same instructor.

Stanislaus State has very effectively implemented SB 1440 and has smoothed the path for transfer students. Building upon the work of a Compass grant, a faculty learning community was formed in 2014 to discuss and develop general education pathways. This learning community (made of up Stanislaus State and Modesto Junior College faculty) developed a proposed model that will create clear and meaningful pathways through existing general education courses and serve as a bridge for transfer between Modesto Junior College and Stanislaus State.

Stanislaus State has also helped establish the Stanislaus Education Partnership. The Partnership (Stanislaus State, Modesto Junior College, and the Stanislaus County Office of Education) is charged with increasing college enrollment in the region, increasing college graduation rates, reducing time to degree, and closing the achievement gap.

Trustee Initiative 5: High Impact Practices for Student Retention **Total Base Budget – \$10,000**

Stanislaus State is currently employing high-impact practices throughout many programs on campus. The initiatives proposed in each of the other areas, in addition to those proposed here, will supplement the activities that are currently in practice. The University will enhance current programs where possible.

- Explore opportunities to enhance existing programs such as an expansion of the online writing tutorial program and a technology check-out program through the University Library.

Short-Term Metric: Additional investment in programs using high-impact practices.

Long-Term Metric: Number of students participating in at least one high-quality, high-impact practice during their first two years of study.

Trustee Initiative 6: Data-Driven Decision Making

Budget – \$90,000

Stanislaus State is currently evaluating various software programs to enhance our capacity to make data driven decisions.

- Adopt advising software.
- Improve the course scheduler.
- Conduct training activities.

Short-Term Metric: Identification of individual students, student groups, programs, and courses that will benefit from focused student success efforts.

Long-Term Metric: Improved graduation rates, reduced time to degree, and narrower achievement gaps.